

A boat trip around the network of rivers and canals is the best way of experiencing the beauty of Wuzhen.

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Tomato vinegar is the main ingredient in probably the most popular Guizhou dish in Beijing.

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"Just like an unopened 'black box' from the airplane crash, the components of the wine have not been interpreted yet."

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By Xiao Rong

Liu Ping never suspected the 20,000 yuan investment she had made in her Uncle Sun's Dawu Group might be illegal, until she heard the announcement that Sun Dawu, a well-known billionaire farmer in Xushui County, Hebei Province, had been formally charged on July 5.

Liu, the acting vice-president of Dawu Group, is now facing the possibility the company may be auctioned by the local government to repay the 35 million yuan allegedly owed to its depositors – employees and local villagers.

Sun Dawu, 49, chairman of Dawu Group, is accused of violating banking laws and State Council regulations by raising a total of 181 million yuan from almost 5,000 local investors since 1995.

Sun and his wife, Liu Huiru, started building their empire in 1985, when they contracted a disused orchard to raise 50 pigs and 1,000 chickens. Since then, the company has expanded into the fields of animal feed production, food processing, grape planting, agricultural machinery production and education.

"Local villagers volunteered to invest their money in our company to support our development, because Dawu Group has contributed a lot to the local economy over these past years," Sun's son Sun Meng told *Beijing Today*.

Sun's two younger brothers, Sun Erwu and Sun Zhihua, who help run the company, were arrested in May on charges of tax evasion.

Loan based on trust

Of the total 35-million-yuan Dawu raised in loans, about 9 million is from its employees. The rest was invested by peasants from nearby villages, Liu Ping told *Beijing Today*. "Local villagers felt it was safe to save their money with us. And there have never been any disputes over credit. We just cannot understand the charge."

Zhang Zhiren, 67, a peasant in Langwuzhuang village, where the company is based, has invested 5,000 yuan in Dawu. Higher interest is one reason for choosing the company, but more important is the convenience of doing business with Dawu.

"The nearest credit agency and banks are over 10 miles away from our village, while Dawu is just a few minutes walk. Also, I can withdraw my money any time I need it," Zhang explained.

When asked about their feelings toward Sun Dawu, most of the peasants in Langwuzhuang interviewed by *Beijing Today* expressed gratitude to and trust in the billionaire.

"We all know Sun is a kind person. Without him, most people in our village would have no jobs. Older people of retiring age, like me, are even offered pensions," said 71-year-old Zhang Baotian.

Sun Meng echoed the views of the villagers toward his father, saying that Dawu Group has provided jobs to over 300 people in Langwuzhuang village and paid salaries totaling over two million yuan per year.

"My father highly values Confucian ideals, especially in company management. It has been a tradition of Dawu Group to contribute to the public welfare of neighboring villages, which has helped him win respect and trust from local people."

Potential conflicts

Xushui county government, however, maintains that it was illegal for Dawu Group to raise funds from the general public without authorization from the

A Little Too Successful

Peasant billionaire arrested for illegal fund raising



The motto of Dawu Group, displayed on the wall of its headquarters in Langwuzhuang village, expresses the ideal that enriching the community should be the company's ultimate goal.



Zhang Baoer, a peasant in Langwuzhuang, has invested 2,000 yuan of his savings in Dawu Group.

Photo by Alicia Xiao

People's Bank of China.

The Xushui People's Bank has told the company repeatedly to stop the illegal fund raising, according to Yu Zhenhai, director of the press office of the county party committee.

Yu also questioned Dawu's ability to repay the funds, saying its annual cash flow amounted to no more than three million yuan.

However when asked to give a general comment on Dawu Group, Yu said the company has contributed greatly to the local economy by creating job opportunities for farmers and improving farming practices.

"But the company has still not repaid over four million yuan in loans from the county agricultural bank, taken out in 1995," Yu said, adding that supporting private enterprises has always been one of the key policies of the local government.

Rural finance market waits to be opened

In regard to the four million yuan loan, which was actually granted to Dawu twice by the local agricultural bank because of the company's strong achievements,

Liu Ping said it was the first and the only large loan the company had taken out since its founding.

"Due to our rapid development, we have frequently applied to borrow money from local state banks since 1998, but seldom with success," said Liu. "That's why we had to finance the growth of our business by raising funds from employees and local villagers."

Sun Meng said his father was too upright to bribe local officials to get bank loans or receive equal treatment among other private enterprises. Sun Dawu himself voiced his opinions on this issue when lecturing at Beijing University and China Agricultural University last year.

"The central government has been asking the state banks to provide more loans to private enterprises, but it's still very difficult to implement the policy at the grass-roots level," he said.

In the opinion of Li Zhiying, secretary of Beijing Renben Development and Research Center, Sun Dawu's case reflects the universal difficulty of China's private enterprises in raising finance for development.



Sun's elderly parents both earn a living independently in the village.

Photos by Yu Chuzhong

"Most private enterprises in China have actually been trying underground loans as a way of raising funds, given that the government is monopolizing the finance sector by only authorizing state banks to grant loans," Li argued.

Bao Yujun, director of China Private Economy Research Center, also called for the opening up of China's finance systems to private commercial banks in a telephone interview with *Beijing Today*.

"The rural finance market in China is now a blank area, as most state banks at county or municipal level have very limited authority in granting loans, especially to private enterprises," said Bao. "The government must attach more importance to the market demand for rural financing to expedite channels for civilian capital."

Sun Dawu's Beijing lawyer Zhu Jiuhu is now considering advising his client to plead innocent, on the grounds that investors deposited their money in Dawu Group of their own free will. "The fund raising was a legal civilian financ-

ing activity that has not been detrimental in any way to society."

Since Sun's arrest, Zhu has received over 60 letters from depositors, expressing faith in Sun and his company.

"Dawu Group has used the loans to create both material and spiritual wealth for the local community, rather than disrupt the financial order. Actually, it is non-performing debts of state banks, rather than civilian loans, that has disrupted financial stability," Zhu said.

However law professor Shi Tiantao of Tsinghua University holds that the fund raising by Dawu Group should be considered illegal, regardless of its impact on the local community.

"It's OK if the company only borrowed the money from its employees, but it's quite different when the target depositors include nearby villagers."

Sun Meng and Liu Ping told *Beijing Today* that they have drafted a four-year repayment plan, though the local government has not approved the scheme. Liu fears the government might confiscate the Dawu School, which is part of the Dawu Group, to raise money to repay the 35 million yuan in loans.

Since Sun's arrest, the company has dismissed over 500 employees, mainly administration staff, to reduce costs. Meanwhile most of the group's businesses, with the exception of the feed and food processing factories, have temporarily ceased operation.

"Even if private enterprises have made mistakes, the government should pilot them in the interim, rather than simply forcing them to shut down," said Sun Meng, who says he is resolved to continue in his father's footsteps.



Quake victim, four-year-old Huali, receives treatment Tuesday at Tanhua township hospital, Dayao County.

Yunnan Quake Toll Reaches 16

As of 1 pm Wednesday, the earthquake in Dayao County, Yunnan Province, had killed 16 people and injured 584, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Of those injured, 104 were in a serious condition, while the lives and livelihoods of some 1.25 million people had been affected.

Some 1,500 head of livestock were killed, 24,000 homes were destroyed and a further 1,186,000 were damaged.

The Yunnan Provincial government has allocated five million yuan (US \$602,000) in aid for victims of the quake.

Relief materials including 4,400 tons, 150 tons of grain, 22,000 articles of clothing and more than 1,800 quilts have been sent to Dayao, Yao'an, Yongren, Wuding and Yuanmou counties in the province's Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Chuxiong, some 180 kilometers from the provincial capital of Kunming.

To date, more than 4,200 makeshift shelters have been set up for victims left homeless by the tremor, which struck at 11:16 pm Monday, measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale. (Xinhua)

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City Opens Door to Foreign Private Capital in SOEs

By Shan Jinliang

Beijing took another step toward the privatization of local state-owned enterprises (SOE) last Wednesday by starting to seek foreign and private capital for mergers or acquisitions of 104 large industrial enterprises owned by the city.

The move is a response to guidelines issued by the central government regarding the gradual withdrawal of state capital from competitive industries. The State Commission of Foreign Trade and Economy issued a regulation in 1999 that permitted foreign capital to join in the merging and reorganization of SOEs, but detailed rules for such transactions still have not been released.

Zhou Minqiu, vice director of

the Beijing Economic Commission announced at a press release held last Wednesday that all the listed SOEs are large and good performers, with assets-to-debt ratios under 100 percent. The 104 companies were chosen from the 186 enterprises directly under the city's administration.

The companies represent a wide range of industries and include famous brands such as Peony televisions, Snow Lotus cashmere, Tongniu garments, Guqiao air conditioners and Double-Crane pharmaceuticals.

"We have been determined to bring almost all qualified companies under the program for outside capital to merge or acquire," said Lu Hao, Beijing vice mayor at the press

release. He added that foreign investors could become major shareholders of these companies after conducting mergers and reorganization.

With the introduction of foreign capital, the city government hopes to solve the problem of widespread lay-offs of employees at poor-performing SOEs by rejuvenating those enterprises, Yu Zhongfu, director of the Enterprise Reform Division, Beijing Economic Commission, told *Beijing Today* on Monday. The project is also aimed at generating a significant amount of money for investment in large-scale construction projects in the city.

Yu said this is not the first time the municipal government has sold stakes in local SOEs, but the

number of firms up for mergers or reorganization by outside capital is unusual. The large scope of the project is intended to cut the total costs of negotiations, he added.

A few companies from China and abroad, including Morgan Stanley, Lenovo Group Holding Corporation and Beijing Time Group, are reported to have contacted the commission regarding the SOEs since last Friday, though a representative of Beijing Time Group denied the company has pursued any such action.

Zhou Minqiu added municipal government departments have drafted two temporary notices regarding specifics of the share selling process and staff arrangement, expected to be issued soon.

The commission announced there are two paths that overseas investors can follow in the merging and reorganization of the city's SOEs. Shares or debts of state-owned or state-controlled enterprises can be transferred to investors, or outside companies can expand their stakes in such enterprises with injections of capital.

Two HK Leading Secretaries Resign

Hong Kong Financial Secretary Antony Leung and Secretary for Security Regina Ip resigned on July 16, sending shockwaves through the Hong Kong political arena.

The government did not say who will fill the vacancy left by Ip, but confirmed that Stephen Ip Shukwan, secretary for economic development and labor, will replace Leung as acting financial secretary.

Ip tendered her resignation on June 25, citing personal reasons, and will officially step down today. Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang said he respected Ip's decision, and hailed her devotion, hard work, leadership skills and ability to take on challenges.

Antony Leung's decision to quit the civil service will be implemented with immediate effect, according to the government statement.

The financial secretary was criticized after he bought a new Lexus in January before he raised auto taxes in March, saving himself HK\$190,000 (US\$24,359). Leung called it an honest oversight and sought to make amends by donating more than twice as much money to charity. (Xinhua)



Antony Leung



Regina Ip

Guarantee Deposit for Domestic Investment Overseas Waived

By Ivy Zhang

Starting this month, the guarantee deposits Chinese enterprises were previously required to pay before investing abroad have been abolished, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) announced at a press conference last Thursday.

According to an earlier statement published on the administration's website dated July 8, companies that have already put up such deposits, which had to equal five percent of all funds invested overseas, will have that money refunded. Applications for such refunds must be submitted to SAFE prior to March 31, 2004.

The new regulation is meant to "simplify administrative approval procedures and encourage domestic enterprises to make investments abroad," an unnamed press officer from SAFE told *Beijing Today*. It does not apply to foreign investors or companies in China.

Guarantee deposits were introduced in 1989 to ensure that domestic enterprises would bring all earnings made abroad back to China. According to SAFE's former regulation, when accumulated returned earnings equaled total overseas investment, a domestic company's deposit would be refunded, plus interest.

"We are refunding these guarantee deposits because some companies' returned earnings have not reached the level of their total investment," said the press officer. She declined to disclose specific information on the amount of money the administration is set to refund.

More information can be found on the administration's website, www.safe.gov.cn, including English language materials.

Foreigner Employment License Fees Forgone

By Shan Jinliang

The Beijing Municipal Bureaus of Finance and Pricing issued a joint statement last week that companies no longer need to pay charges for foreigners' employment license as of the start of this month.

A spokesperson for the Foreigners' Employment Division of the Beijing Bureau of Labor and Social Security confirmed the news to *Beijing Today* on Tuesday, adding the while the former 10 yuan charge has been waived, the procedures for filing for licenses for foreign employees have otherwise not been changed.

According to a national regulation issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in 2001, local bureaus of labor and social security are empowered to handle foreign employment licenses, and should issue such documents to qualified foreigners within 15 days of application.

New Green Card Policy to Draw Talented Outsiders

By Zhao Pu

The first group of 104 non-locals, or *waidiren*, to be given work and residence certificates under a new local policy received their "green cards" last Tuesday.

The municipal government has loosened the laws related to the granting of these certificates to non-locals in order to attract more talented personnel and investment from around the country, said Xin Tielang, director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Personnel last week, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Fan Wenli, a senior accountant at Golden Elephant Pharmacy, was one of the first receivers of the reformed green cards. "With this, I'll no longer have to pay extra fees for my daughter's education," she was quoted as saying in the report.

Beneficiaries of the new residence and work permit policy will enjoy treatment more like that of native Beijingers. They can purchase and register cars, buy local housing, and are exempt from paying surcharges for their children's education.

However, not all non-locals can receive the certificates. The municipal government has named 44 kinds of professionals in various fields including advertising, computers, education, marketing and finance with higher education backgrounds eligible for the new cards.

According to the bureau of personnel, only around 30,000 of the two million non-locals working in this city meet the qualifications for the certificates. To date, around 1,700 people have registered at the bureau to apply for new "green cards".



Andrew McEwen and Ed Jocelyn, two Englishmen that set out in mid-October 2002 from Yudu, Jiangxi Province, to retrace the entire route of the original Long March of the Red Army, are already well on their way in their trek through some of China's most remote country.

Following the route of the original trek, the march is expected to end in Wuzhizhen, Shaanxi province, on October 19, 2003.

There's a state of mindlessness which makes marching more tolerable, when the conscious part of the brain disengages from the process of movement and a man begins to feel more like he is merely driving on a sunny afternoon.

But today, although sunny, is not that day.

Andy concentrates on each and every step. His feet, ankles and knees throb. Shoulders shudder under the 25-kilo weight of the rucksack. The nylon straps burn red lines across his collarbone.

Occasionally he closes his eyes...just for a second, to drift into a daydream...as he trudges down the straight and easy road to Malong county town, Yunnan. But an angry stomach intervenes. Bile regurgitates back up to the throat - Andy finds he is literally "swallowing bitterness".

Andy's decision to quit the march had been taken five days earlier. Bedridden in a Kunming hospital for the best part of a month with an undiagnosed variety of stomach-related illnesses, he could find no one who knew why there had been no improvement. Doctors advised he return to Beijing for rest and recuperation, for more tests and attempts at diagnosis. Andy refused.

In the full-length bathroom mirror of the three-star Baiyun Hotel on Wednesday June 11, Andy faced the most difficult decision of his march, one of the most difficult of his life. He noted his new svelte figure - about six kilos lighter. He noted he had been to the toilet five times that morning. He noted how he was struggling to stand up straight.

There was no more time left. He must quit. But maybe, just maybe, if he waited just one more day...

Next door, Ed faced different demons. The weather window was



The children of Kedu hunt autographs from two large-nosed celebrities outside the former Long March residence of Mao Zedong on June 24.

Pain and Pride on New Long March



closing on crossing the Snow Mountains. He worked on a new timetable, new safety protocols and fitting a satellite phone and tent into his bulging rucksack. He noted Andy had used up the entire roll of emergency toilet paper, plus an important SARS editorial from the *People's Daily*.

Ed prepared to walk across Sich-

uan's Snow Mountains and grasslands singlehanded, places where the Red Army suffered its most chilling losses.

He reckoned he had better get going fast, by Sunday at the latest, or risk losing any chance of completing what was left of the New Long March.

The next morning, something very unexpected happened when Andy went to the toilet - an improvement. Not since Clapham Common in 1987 had a trip to the WC elicited so much excitement.

Still pulling up his trousers, Andy burst out of the bathroom to break the exciting bowel action to his erstwhile comrade. Ed seemed nonplussed at first. Andy explained further: "It means I'm staying."

Maybe it was all just a flash in the pan, so to speak. "Or maybe," said Andy, "we march again on Sunday."

Well that was three days ago when

all seemed well and dandy with the world. Today, Andy wobbles down Malong main street, searching to remember how to walk. A few paces behind, Ed walks ready to catch him. Andy stumbles, but does not fall.

The first foreign visitor to Malong County Town for many a year does not stride out of a tax-free Pajero. Instead, a half-man, half-jellyfish slithers into the town saloon like he just crossed the Badlands. And back.

After registration, Ed carries both backpacks upstairs to their room. There, he finds his partner snoring with his boots on.

Andy awoke the next morning in a pool of his own dribble, but ready to walk another day. Since then, he has completed a further 16 days of the march, 340 kilometers. The recovery remains patchy at best, but the determination of both New Long Marchers remains indomitable.

For more information on their progress to the Luding Bridge press conference, see [www. long-march 2003.com](http://www.long-march 2003.com).

Chinese Lighter Makers Overcome Dumping Charges

By Xiao Rong

Domestic lighter producers, mostly from Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province, are posed to win a dumping dispute against European competitors, as their counterparts from the European Union (EU) announced the withdrawal of their lawsuit on July 14.

Huang Fajing, chairman of the Wenzhou Rifeng Lighter Company told *Beijing Today* on Monday that the group received a written notice from the EU last Thursday informing them that the European Federation of Lighter Producers was calling off anti-dumping investigations against Chinese manufacturers it started last June. The EU is expected to issue a final ruling on the trade dispute if the Chinese companies raise no further objections.

"This is encouraging news for

China's lighter industry and should clear some of the obstacles to the export of our products to the European market. It shows our lighter producers have been competing with their international rivals in accordance with WTO rules," he added.

Huang, named vice director of the Wenzhou Smoking Products Manufacturers Association last year, initiated a two-week lobbying trip to Europe in April 2002 by colleagues in the domestic industry to lobby against a draft law related to child resistance requirements in lighters proposed by the Central European Normalization Organization. That draft regulation called for the introduction of child-safety mechanisms in low-cost lighters, meaning those with customs valuations or ex-factory prices of under two euros.

Following the approval of the

draft law, in June last year the EU launched anti-dumping investigations against refillable lighters from China and Southeast Asian countries at the request of European lighter producers.

In response to the suit, 15 domestic lighter producers based in Wenzhou rallied together to answer the charges on the grounds that their products have in no way negatively effected the European lighter industry. Five other domestic producers decided to oppose the suit individually.

Answering the lawsuit has so far cost the 15 companies a total of around 600,000 yuan, with Huang Fajing's enterprise alone spending over 100,000 yuan. However, Huang believes their actions are worthwhile.

"If we didn't face the charges, we would surely have lost. Even if

we finally do come out victorious, it should not be considered an honor, just a routine resolution to an international trade dispute. What we need to focus on in the future is improving the quality of our lighters," he said.

Zhou Xiaoping, director of the fair trade department of the Wenzhou Bureau of Foreign Trade Bureau, commented that the withdrawal of the lawsuits is an initial victory that will encourage other light industries based in the city that have suffered setbacks from similar trade barriers. He added that local manufacturers should keep close watch of international markets in the future to prevent the creation of further obstacles to trade.

Wenzhou produces around 500 million metal cigarette lighters each year, making up 70 percent of all global volume. The EU is the largest market for Chinese lighters, accounting for one fourth of all exports.

Tycoon Denies Disappearance

By Charles Jiang/Li Hua

A Chinese businessman has denied rumors that he had fled to Australia and that his company had cooked its accounts.

Jiang Quanlong, chairman of Hong Kong-listed China Rare Earth Holdings (0769, HK) told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Saturday that his company is operating normally, and that the rumors were spread by people with an axe to grind in order to tarnish the image of the company and to undermine its market position.

"How could I give up the company I have devoted my lifetime to? Why



Jiang Quanlong

Photos by Bqf

should I flee to a foreign country? I simply went to Australia on a business tour," said Jiang.

He added that investigations by the Hong Kong Stock Exchange would prove that his company is innocent of any wrongdoing.

When asked why accounting companies have terminated their auditing contracts with his company, he explained that the company has the right to choose which accounting company it wants to work with.

China Rare Earth Holdings started as a small workshop established by Jiang in 1984 with an investment

of 3,000 yuan.

After years of growth, the company was successfully listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 1999 and overnight became a star among Chinese private enterprises. In 2001, *Forbes* listed Jiang as the 39th richest person in Chinese mainland.

However, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) terminated its auditing contract with China Rare Earth after PWC's merger with Andersen's Hong Kong unit. Ernst and Young picked up the contract but also terminated it in March. KPMG then moved in, but terminated its contract with the firm just one month later. Rumors that it had inflated profits then began to haunt the company.

In November 2002, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange launched an investigation into the company after receiving allegations that the company manipulated operational figures in order to get listed in 1999, and had continued to do so in annual reports since then. According to the allegations, the company has inflated its revenue by 100-300 million yuan (US \$12-36 million) over the past three years.

Although China Rare Earth Holdings repeatedly insisted the accusations claiming its sales and profit figures were fabricated were "unfounded, groundless and libelous," its shares, once worth HK \$3, have fallen to below HK \$0.5.

Commercial Banks Low-key on Charges

By Lisa Lee

China's "big four" commercial banks are keeping silent on the recent issue of the Provisional Measures on Service Price Management of Commercial Banks, according to a report in *Beijing Times*.

According to the new regulation, jointly issued by the China Banking Regulatory Commission and the State Development Planning Commission on June 26, commercial banks can now themselves determine what services should be charged, what standards the charges should base on and what procedures they go through to set the prices.

"Our bank hasn't made a final decision," said an unnamed staff member from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

The Agricultural Bank of China would probably charge primarily on some traditional services, which would have little impact on business on line, one of its officials said.

"It's hard for banks to

charge fees on some services. Because whoever initiates the charges, will attract the most criticism," said an anonymous source from the China Construction Bank.

As an example, the source said that last year, after banks won approval to charge for inter-bank transactions, their bank happened to be the first to bring in such charges, and as a result, lost many customers.

Zhao Xijun, vice-director of the Financial Institute of Renmin University commented, "Generally, commercial banks take these factors into consideration when working out their respective regulations on charges: the costs of human and material resources for the supply of some services, the state of their competitors, the acceptance of customers about the fees, and related regulations."

Some analysts suggest the charges will be relatively modest, given that most commercial banks provide much the same range of services.

Major Banks Reduce Non-performing Ratio

By Ivy Zhang

China's four major state-owned commercial banks have all released yearly or half-yearly business reports recently. While bad loan ratios have declined, the banks are continuing to seek co-operative partners to tackle non-performing loans.

This year, for the first time, all commercial banks in China are required to release to the public their operational status on a regular basis.

The Agricultural Bank of China's bad loan ratio stands at about 30 percent, some five percent lower than that of last year. Meanwhile, the Bank of Communications' bad loan ratio stands at just over 14 percent, almost three percent lower than that of last year.

By mid-June this year, China Construction Bank's bad loan ratio was 13 percent, about three percent lower than that of early this year.

Correspondingly, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China's bad loan ratio for the first half of this year is 22 percent, three percent lower than that of early this year.

By the end of June, the Bank of China's non-performing assets ratio stood at 19 percent, about three percent lower than it was at the beginning of the year.

In a major reform of the banking industry, the government established four assets management companies in 2000 to take over 1.4 trillion yuan (US \$168 billion) in non-performing loans

from state-owned commercial banks.

These banks are now seeking foreign partners to speed up the disposal of non-performing loans, a major challenge they must overcome before going public.

In the first such cooperation between a state-owned commercial bank and a foreign company, the China Construction Bank and Morgan Stanley signed a contract early this month to embark on a pilot project for the disposal of no-performing loans. This is the first time for Morgan Stanley to acquire non-performing assets from a Chinese state-owned commercial bank on a "one-on-one" basis.

The pilot projects involve 4.3 billion yuan in principal and interest book balance as an assets package, including a balance of 3.5 billion yuan of principal.

The two parties will jointly establish a special-purpose vehicle and an assets service company to co-manage the assets package.

In 2002, the China Construction Bank disposed of some 65 billion yuan of non-performing loans and retrieved about 33 billion yuan of assets, including about 29 billion yuan in cash.

By the end of 2002, the non-performing ratio of all the loans extended by the China Construction Bank, including overseas institutional lending, stood at 15 percent, the lowest among the four major state-owned commercial banks.



Airbus Vows Victory Over Boeing

By Shan Jinliang

On delivering the latest A319 aircraft to Air China last Wednesday, the 2,000th mode worldwide, European airline producer Airbus said it would meet its goal of delivering more planes than its rival US-based Boeing and overtake it this year.

Airbus president and CEO Noel Forgeard was somewhat cautious on the same issue when he spoke to press in Beijing two months ago. At that time, when China was still under the shadow of SARS, Forgeard said Airbus needed to take another evaluation this June to make sure if there is risk for it to delivery 300 planes this year.

Airbus China vice president Yang Peiyi told *Beijing Youth Daily* last Thursday that the company's goal of delivering 300 planes worldwide this year looks to be on target, espe-

cially with the delivery to the Chinese market taking place on time. Sources from China's top three airlines; Air China, Southern Airlines and Eastern Airlines, confirmed to *Beijing Youth Daily* last week they will receive the 34 planes on order on time this year.

In a telephone interview with *Beijing Today* on Tuesday, Airbus China press and information manager, Gu Ming, said the company has outperformed its rival in new orders in the last three years, and will overtake Boeing, which this year would deliver only 285 planes worldwide.

"It will be the first time for Airbus to outsell Boeing," said Gu, and China will be a decisive market, accounting for just over one tenth of the new orders.

Currently Boeing is promoting a new project it hopes will give it an edge over Airbus, a

200-seat 7E7 airliner it claims could raise operational efficiency by 20 percent. The new planes are expected to be available in 2008, however to date, no major airlines have publicly expressed interest in purchasing it.

Meanwhile Airbus says it is confident it will find a market in China for its new A380 airliners, to be put into operation in 2006.

While Boeing has not commented on Airbus's ambitious program to date, industry analysts are not quite as optimistic about the company's prospects as Airbus itself is. Tianxiang Investment Consultancy analyst Liu Qi told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that the historical experience of Boeing should never be underestimated. Boeing now takes a 78 percent share in the Chinese mainland airlines market, according to *Economic Daily* on Tuesday.

Honeywell Relocates Asia-Pacific Office to Shanghai

By Shan Jinliang

Honeywell announced last Wednesday it has relocated its Asia-Pacific corporate headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai, as part of its strategy to capitalise on growth opportunities in China.

In addition, Honeywell has entered into an agreement with the Pudong New Area

Government to acquire land in the Zhangjiang Hi-tech Park. The plot will house Honeywell's engineering, research and development in Shanghai, as well as other supporting functions.

The technology leader has invested US \$500 million with 22 wholly owned or joint ventures in the Chinese mainland since

Honeywell China Investment Corporation was established in 1996. Honeywell chairman and president Francis Yuen said this figure will be increased in the coming years.

Honeywell reported a total sales volume of \$22.3 billion in 2002, and ranks 195th among the world's top 500 companies.

Hotel Room Occupancy Ranks Sixth Worldwide

By Yu Shanshan

The average occupancy rates and room costs of Chinese hotels ranks sixth and sixteenth respectively among 83 countries in a newly released joint study by China Tourist Hotels Association and US-based Horwath Capital Management Consultants.

The 2003 *China Hotel Industry Study* was compiled in line with international practice, the first time the Chinese hotels industry has adopted in-

ternational reporting standards to measure hotels' performance and financial situation.

The study was based on a sample of 302 hotels drawn from every province, surveying revenue, occupancy rates, fixed and recurring costs, expenditure, reservation systems and rates.

The study showed that in 2003, hotel profits depended primarily on occupancy. Five-star hotels in Shanghai and Beijing were found to be the most efficient and profitable. In

terms of occupancy rates, revenue and room cost of Shanghai's hotels are higher than Beijing's by 10 to 20 percent.

However, according to the report, the average profit from every hotel room is US \$25 dollars, ranking 12 internationally. Yan Qingguang, president of Horwath said low room costs and management standard of China's hotels is the reason.

Xin Tao, vice chairman of the association said they plan to release such a report annually, making the statistics available to hotels around the world.

Berlin and Beijing to Host Business Congress

By Cindy L. Jiang

German Business weekly *Wirtschafts Woche* announced a series of cooperative projects with its Chinese counterpart *Jingji Ribao* (*Economic Daily*) at the Kempinski Hotel last Thursday.

In response to the growing interest of its readers in China, chief editor Stefen Baron said the magazine would publish a special issue titled "China, the new opportunities" on October 1, China's National Day.

The special issue follows a series of five special reports on China published in the first half of this year.

Feng Bin, chief editor of *Jingji Ribao* says the cooperation will boost communication between enterprises in both countries. "It will also help build economic relations between the two countries," he said.

The two economic publications are also planning a German-Chinese Business Congress in both Berlin and Beijing. The congress will take place from October 22 to 24 in Berlin, and then in April next year in Beijing. The congresses are intended to provide further business opportunities for both sides.



Cadillac CTS

Shanghai to Manufacture New Cadillac

By Wang Junguang/Shan Jinliang

Chinese consumers will next year have the opportunity to drive a Cadillac CTS, like the one Morpheus drives in *Matrix Reloaded*. The car, to be jointly produced by US General Motors and Shanghai Automobile Industrial Corporation (SAIC), is the result of an agreement by the two sides to inject two billion yuan into their joint venture in Shanghai.

The two companies announced the news last Monday. General Motors said it plans to introduce all its latest models to the Chinese market, including the top-of-the-line Cadillac, which is featured on Cadillac's new Chinese website, www.cadillac.com.cn.

China Auto Industrial Consultancy chief analyst Jia Xinguang told *Beijing Youth Daily* last Monday that the capital injection will solve General Motors' lack of productivity problem, enabling it to produce more cars for the burgeoning market.

Volkswagen Boosts Investment in China

By Shan Jinliang

Europe's largest automaker, Volkswagen, has announced it will invest six billion euros in China in the coming five years, in a bid to remain frontrunner in a market facing fierce competition from US and Japanese automakers.

Speaking in Changchun, capital of Jilin Province, Ferdinand Piech, chairman of the board of Volkswagen told the press the investment was the largest yet the company has made in China.

Volkswagen has seen its market share fall in the Chinese market, though its auto sales here are still on the rise, while Japan's Honda and Mazda and US General Motors and Ford are increasing their share with more new auto models. Sedans made by Volkswagen's two factories in China; Changchun-based First Automobile Works (FAW) and Shanghai Auto Industrial Corporation (SAIC), accounted for 39.7 percent of the national market in the first five months of this year, while the figure for the same period last year was 43.1 percent.

Also on Tuesday, Volkswagen held a foundation-laying ceremony for FAW's second factory, for which the total investment will reach 1.2 billion euros, or 12.3 billion yuan.

With an annual production ability of 330,000 units, the new factory will produce the newest models, including Golf, doubling the overall productivity of FAW.

Meanwhile Volkswagen says it is also in discussions with its other partner, SAIC, on how to expand productivity and whether a new factory is needed. SAIC president Hu Maoyuan said the company would increase its productivity to 700,000 units after expanding its old factory, a 75 percent rise. The company also denied rumors that it was seeking a third partner in China.



Photo provided by Tom.com

Russian Oil Tycoon Prepares Succession in Case of Arrest

Moscow, Jul 14 (AFP) - Russia's richest man, oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, has picked a possible successor to take over the helm of his Yukos group if he is arrested under a widening fraud probe.

The *Kommersant* newspaper reported on Monday that the authorities are investigating tax evasion at oil firms Yukos and Sibneft, which are due to merge to create the world's fourth-ranked producer. Yukos's chief financier is also in jail on embezzlement charges.

Khodorkovsky, 40, who has been in the United States at a

business elite conference attended by Microsoft founder Bill Gates, plans to return to Russia on Tuesday, the daily reported.

But after masked police raided Yukos offices in Moscow on Friday, spending nearly 17 hours searching through computer archives, the billionaire magnate is preparing for the worst, *Kommersant* quoted a top Yukos official as saying.

First in line to replace him is the group's chief financier Platon Lebedev, who is already in jail since being arrested on July 2 and charged with defrauding a state

company, Apatit, in 1994.

Next in line would be Yuri Golubev, who is standing in for Lebedev as head of the Menatep group, which owns 61 percent of Yukos.

If all the top Yukos managers were unable to carry out the role, Lord Jacob Rothschild, head of the English branch of the Rothschild family, would step in, the company official told *Kommersant* on condition of anonymity.

Lord Rothschild, who is president of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, is a co-founder of the Yukos-financed Open Russia Foundation along with former US

form is undertaken.

In view of economic development, legal guarantees are the key, and conflicts have to be resolved in a democratic way.

- Du Gangjian, professor of public administration, National Institute of Administration



Mikhail Khodorkovsky

secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

Yukos officials declined to comment on the *Kommersant* report.

But the deputy head of the company's legal department, Dmitry Gololobov, told journalists that the police raid marked "an escalation of arbitrariness" and he could not rule out the arrest of top executives.

The prosecutors ordered the action to show that "they can carry out searches where ever they want, to intimidate us," Gololobov said.

Yukos planned to lodge a legal complaint on Tuesday, he added.

Chinese Tycoons in recent financial scandals:

Xu Peixin, Trend Technology
Yang Bin, Euro-Asia Agricultural
Zhou Zhengyi, Merchants Hk
Jiang Quanlong, China Rare Earth
Qian Yongwei, Shanghai Wantai Group
Yang Rong, Hua Chen Group

Analyst's Take:

Legal improvement includes the improvement of the relevant articles of the Constitution, which is crucial for the handling of private capital accumulation.

Hungary Eager to Introduce Euro

Budapest, (Interfax-Europe) - The government is committed to Hungary introducing the euro as its official currency as of January 1 2008, prime minister Peter Medgyessy announced after Wednesday's government meeting. Hungary will join the EU exchange rate mechanism (ERM) at the earliest possible point, in May 2004, according to the prime minister.

However, Medgyessy also noted that "all good things have a price," and that reforms will be needed to bring both inflation and the state budget deficit down to 3% in the next four years, while keeping state debt at 60% of GDP. "2004 is the first year on the way to meeting the requirements for the introduction of the euro," he said.

In order to take a first step in the needed direction, Medgyessy said the government has decided the budget deficit should be 3.8% of GDP in 2004. This will involve 11.6% growth in gross consolidated revenues, and 8.3% growth in expenditures next year. In response to a question on budget tightening next year, Medgyessy said, "it is difficult to speak about tightening when expenditures are planned to grow at over eight percent."

Significantly, Medgyessy said that next year wages will rise in line with inflation - which may imply zero growth in real terms. Pensions will also rise with the payment of 53rd and 54th week benefits, and family supplements will maintain their value, he said. The government will continue spending on housing support and the development of motorways, and efforts for military reform will proceed.

The euro will eliminate transaction costs for Hungarian businesses and bring lower interest rates, Medgyessy said. For the population, the European currency will mean more jobs and growth, and ensured economic opportunities.

Finance minister Csaba Laszlo said the revised forecast for the budget deficit in 2003 is 4.8% of GDP, compared to the earlier official 4.5% forecast.

"We have arrived at the starting point of a 4-5 year process that other EU countries also went through in order to introduce the euro," said Laszlo. He said that a plan for the accession to the euro zone would be completed by August 15, and that the draft budget for 2004 will be submitted to par-



The Fifth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Economic Ministers' Meeting (EMM) opened Thursday in Dalian, a coastal city in northeast China's Liaoning Province.

Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi addressed the opening of the meeting attended by

over 250 delegates from all the 26 ASEM members.

The EMM, one of the most important ministerial meetings of the ASEM, will focus on six topics: global economic growth, the new round of World Trade Organiza-

tion (WTO) free trade talks, facilitation of trade, promotion of investment, direction of development of Asian and European economies and closer partnership between the two continents.

(By Xinhua)

Big Fines for German Insurers

Frankfurt, July 21 (FT) - Germany's fragile insurance sector is set for another blow after it emerged on Monday night that at least eight of the country's biggest insurers have been found guilty of price-fixing.

After a year-long inquiry by the Bundeskartellamt (cartel office), the insurers face fines running into hundreds of millions of euros, say people close to the inquiry.

Allianz and Gerling, the two biggest operators, are set to be the worst affected, although both said on Monday they had allocated provisions to cover the risk of being fined.

The cartel office is expected to communicate its decision to the insurers this week. They will have until the end of August to respond to the accusations before the office decides on the amount of the fines.

In April the office imposed penalties totaling 661m euros - the stiffest yet - on six cement makers. The sums levied on the insurers will be calculated on the basis of a three-times mul-

tiple of the extra revenue generated by the cartel regime.

The price-fixing dates from July 1999, when the insurers are said to have agreed the parameters of future premium increases at a meeting of the industrial fire insurance committee of the GdV, the industry association.

The cartel office findings come as Germany's insurance sector struggles to rebuild confidence after Mannheimer Lebensversicherung, the life insurer, was forced into insolvency last month. A poll by the newspaper Welt am Sonntag indicated 52 per cent of Germans no longer had faith in life insurers.

The sector as a whole remains weakened by the capital erosion caused by tumbling equity markets last year and early this year.

Allianz, Germany's biggest insurer, said on Monday night: "We have changed our systems and have brought in managers responsible for competitive issues."

I.B.M. To Shift White-Collar Jobs Overseas

New York, July 22 (The New York Times) - With American corporations under increasing pressure to cut costs and build global supply networks, two senior I.B.M. officials told their corporate colleagues around the world in a recorded conference call that I.B.M. needed to accelerate its efforts to move white-collar, often high-paying, jobs overseas even though that might create a backlash among politicians and its own employees.

During the call, I.B.M.'s top employee relations executives said that three million service jobs were expected to shift to foreign workers by 2015 and that I.B.M. should move some of its jobs now done in the United States, including software design jobs, to India and other countries.

(By Steven Greenhouse)

Stocks Rise on Earnings, Saddam Sons' Deaths

New York, Jul 22 (Reuters) - Stocks rose on Tuesday, underpinned by solid earnings from companies like Texas Instruments Inc. and spurred by news Saddam Hussein's two sons were killed in a gun-battle with US soldiers in Iraq.

The market took off on first reports, later confirmed by the US military, that Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay might have been killed. The news soothed fears the persistent unrest in Iraq could hinder the still-fragile US economic recovery.

"People were just concerned that it's costing us quite a bit in money and in lives -- a lot more than people were expecting after it was officially declared over," said Owen Fitzpatrick, head of the US equity group at Deutsche Bank Private Banking. "This type of news we had today doesn't put an end to it, but it lessens the perception that this thing will drag on."

Bush Officials Laud Post-Enron Crackdown

Washington, July 22 (AP) - The Bush administration says it has helped net more than 250 white-collar crime convictions, deterred fraud in boardrooms and restored investor confidence in the year since President Bush established a panel to combat corporate corruption.

"I hope we've seen the worst of it," Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman William Donaldson said Tuesday after meeting with Bush for a progress report. "From here on out, the country and the business community is well informed of the risks" of committing corporate fraud, he said.

(By Scott Lindlaw)

India Dismisses World Bank Report - BBC

Singapore, July 22 (Dow Jones) - India's finance officials have dismissed a recent report from the World Bank (news - web sites), which called for the government to rein in spending or risk possible economic catastrophe, the BBC reported on its website late Tuesday.

Ashok Lahiri, India's chief economic adviser, said the government's budget deficit won't exceed the target because the outlook for growth is strong.

"All the parameters are sound, with exports going up, balance of payments improving, forex reserves at over \$83 billion, drought and global slowdown behind us," the BBC quoted D.C. Gupta, the finance secretary, as saying.

"Today's position is such that we can definitely achieve targets."

South Pacific Warms To Pooling Plan

Canberra, July 23 (Dow Jones) - South Pacific nations have been positive to an Australian government proposal for some of the smaller nations to pool stretched regional resources, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Wednesday.

Downer revealed that the Australian government has been holding talks with the nations of the South Pacific for some time over the idea of merging regional institutions such as airlines or police.

"I think generally speaking they're very much in favor of this but it would depend how you did it and what particular types of activities you designate for pooling," Downer told reporters.

College Grads Kowtow to Public for Sick Schoolmate

By Sun Ming

After waiting for nearly a year, 19-year-old Lin Biling is finally set to receive a bone marrow transplant needed to save her life.

In order to raise money for her, 27 of Lin's former college classmates begged for money by kneeling in public outside the office building of the telecommunications bureau in downtown Fuzhou, Fujian Province on July 6. Their action quickly rendered Lin and the other students well-known throughout that city, and subsequently donations started to come in from all over the country, even from some Chinese in the US.



Photo by Wu Ailan

"Even though I've received nearly 300,000 yuan in donations, enough to cover my huge medical expenses, I don't really feel relieved," Lin told Fuzhou-

based newspaper *Haixia Daily* on Monday, "I am very grateful and indebted to my schoolmates."

Lin was diagnosed with leukemia in July last year, just a few days before she graduated from Fuzhou University. To pay for her treatment, her family, poor farmers from the small town of Fujian, accrued over 50,000 in debt. Yet they were still far from able to pay for the one treatment that could actually save her life, a bone marrow transplant.

"She was lucky, because her brother's marrow was a match, but getting together all the money needed for the operation was a big problem," said schoolmate Cheng

Fuyou, one of the organizers of the "Kneel Down Action", "She was too weak to wait, and we did not have that kind of money, so we decided to take this action."

Lin's former schoolmates planned to seek help from the local government, but were put off by the lengthy bureaucratic procedures involved. "That's why I got the idea to kneel down in public. I thought it was probably the only effective way to raise money for Lin. We had to put our dignity aside," said Cheng.

After spending two hours on their knees, the young people managed to raise 8,000 yuan before they were sent home by police.

Wei Jingfu, a sociologist from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes this event is a sign that more needs to be done towards the improvement of the system for aiding the disadvantaged in this country. "I think what this shows is that it's time for us to pay more attention to how to help people like Lin," he told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

Massive Chasm Found in Suburb

By Lisa Lee

An enormous, ancient underground cavern was discovered in the town of Shidu in Fangshan District, announced the geological research institute of the Beijing Geology and Mineral Resources Prospecting and Developing Bureau on June 17.

At the beginning of this year, an investigation team led by Dong Guizhou, general engineer for the Beijing Geology Research Institute, headed to the area for research, and were told about the cavern when they reached Wanglaopu village, about one kilometer north of Shidu.

According to villagers, a Taoist priest surnamed Meng lived in the cave for many years decades ago, finally leaving in the 1970s. No one knows where he went, adding to the mystery and suspicion with which locals have long regarded the cavern.

Undaunted, Dong led a team of colleagues into the chasm and discovered an amazing scene. The cavern ranges from 25 to 50 meters high and around eight to 10 meters wide. It is broken into four main areas, each large enough to hold around 1,000 people, and the biggest chamber is around 800 meters long.



Photo by An Feng

Faulty Elevator Traps 14 in Modern Plaza

By Chen Si

Around 7 pm last Thursday, 14 local people experienced every claustrophobic's nightmare. They were trapped in an elevator in Modern Plaza in Haidian District, finally freed after spending 20 minutes in the malfunctioning lift.

"The second elevator suddenly stopped as it was descending from the sixth floor to the third floor. We called the shopping center's facility control office several times, but we were just told we had to wait," recalled Zhang Jie, one of the people stuck in the lift.

As air in the elevator went stale, the restless shoppers tried to open the door with their keys and two managed to pry the door open a bit. They then inserted the handle of a cart inside the elevator and widened the gap to four centimeters, letting in some fresh air.

Around 20 minutes later, elevator repairmen were able to get the elevator to descend to the second floor using a hand crank and then opened the door, freeing the trapped consumers.

Pan Yuming, director of the plaza's executive office, attributed the incident to a lack of sufficient repair personnel and their inattentive attitude towards the problem. Eleven of the customers have received 200 yuan each from the plaza as spiritual compensation.



Photo by Liu Xingliang

Last week, the Deshengmen Cultural Heritage Protection Bureau hosted the opening of a beer festival at ancient Deshengmen gate on the North Second Ring Road. The public is invited to come enjoy cool brews and good views at the tower as they are served by waitstaff in period costumes. The event will run until September.

Huge Heroin Trafficking Ring Busted

By Yu Shanshan

The Beijing Police on July 14 smashed a major drug trafficking operation between Gansu Province and the capital, seizing 13.2 kilograms of heroin and confiscating 120,000 yuan in cash made from drug sales.

It is the largest case of its kind recorded in Beijing since 1949, a spokesman for Municipal Public Security Bureau announced last Thursday.

On June 26, International Anti-Drug Day, the narcotics squad of the municipal police received information from their counterparts in Gansu that a major drug deal had gone through and the narcotics were being covertly transported by a woman resident of Beijing.

A two-day manhunt led to the capture of the woman, Ma Xiuqin, who lived in the Nanyunxiang community in Xuanwu District. The police first staked out the community, and then on June 28, an undercover investigator happened to take two photographs of her after noting her Northwestern accent as she walked out of a building and made a call on her mobile phone at a nearby bus station.

According to the police, three days later they learned Ma also rented another residence, apartment no. A 4 in the Yingtaoyuan Toutiao complex, just a fifteen-minute walk from her home in Nanyunxiang. Inside the sec-

ond apartment, police found Zhang Ganiang, Ma's assistant and also a narcotics dealer, who previously served a five-year jail sentence for dealing drugs in Lanzhou, Gansu.

On July 1, Ma was captured on her way to a deal. Police uncovered some heroin on her and 120,000 yuan in her home in Nanyunxiang. Zhang was arrested in the Yingtaoyuan apartment shortly afterwards. However, there were no traces of the larger stash of heroin in either residence, and the two suspects refused to disclose where the drugs were hidden.

On July 2, while searching Ma's place, one police officer came across a lease contract set to expire on July 5 for apartment no. 96 in Nanhengxijie, Xuanwu District. Inside a closet in the bedroom of that residence were a paper box and two black plastic bags that contained a total of 13.2 kilograms of heroin. Ma confessed to trafficking drugs shortly after the incriminating discovery.

According to the police, she said she began dealing and transporting drugs in late 2002. This June, she sent 3 million yuan earned from narcotics deals back to her boss in Lanzhou. Ma added that she personally took home 100 yuan for every 10,000 yuan she earned from selling heroin.

Elderly Man Seeks Help for Ultimate Sacrifice

By Dong Nan

Zhang Yunfeng, a 77-year-old resident of Chongqing municipality, is seeking death for an unusual reason. In the middle of this month, he contacted media in his area to help him in his quest for assistance in dying, not because he has an incurable disease or leads an unhappy life, but because he wants to donate his corneas to his community.

He got the idea after reading reports in Chongqing newspapers about the desperate shortage of corneas facing local eye banks.

"I'm going to die sooner or later, so I think it would be honorable to sacrifice myself for the good of others. My daughter is happy and healthy and I have persuaded my wife to the merit of the idea," Zhang said.

His wife, Wang Anju, told *Beijing Youth Daily* that Zhang suffered from brain hemorrhages in 1985 and 1991, but has not had relapses since and is healthy.

"I thought he was crazy when he told me his decision, but his reasoning and language were clear, so I knew



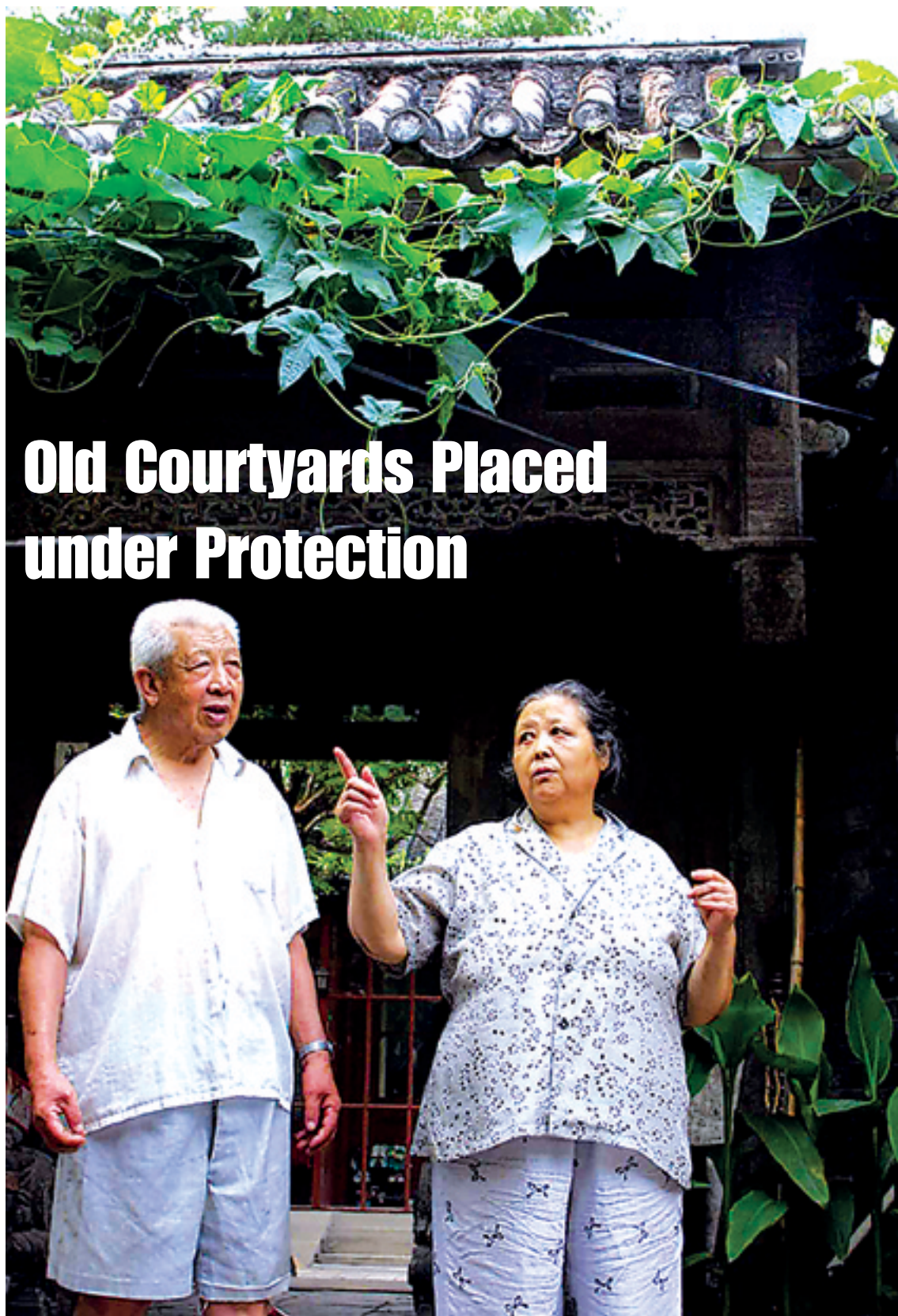
Zhang Yunfeng

he was serious," she recalled. While she initially adamantly opposed his death wish, Wang eventually agreed, at least nominally. She whispered to the *Beijing Youth Daily* reporter, "People told me the government would never allow a healthy man to get assistance in suicide, so I told him I agreed."

Zhang said he is aware that euthanasia is illegal in this country. He appealed to the media to help him get a special exemption to that policy. "My only last wish would be to be posthumously admitted as a member of the Communist Party," he said.

"Except for being a little hard of hearing, Zhang is relatively healthy and sane," said Ms. Li, director of the community committee for Zhang's housing area.

Old Courtyards Placed under Protection



By Zhao Pu

For Sun Minghuan and his neighbors, July 16 was an encouraging day. The *siheyuan*, or traditional four-walled courtyard, in which they live at No. 39 on Dongsì Shi'ertiao was put under the blanket of the new Siheyuan Preservation Project, aimed at protecting 200 old courtyards from the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing.

The courtyard is the number one item on the list of sites under the Siheyuan Preservation Project launched by several bureaus of the municipal government, including the Bureau of Cultural Relics and the City Planning Commission. Last Wednesday, acting Beijing mayor Wang Qishan led a ceremony for the launch of the project at Sun's siheyuan.

The 200 courtyards targeted for protection were selected from

Sun Minghuan and his wife outside their historic home

Photos by Wu Qiang



A bird's eye view of the No. 39 courtyard on Dongsì Shi'ertiao

more than 1,000 of the best-preserved siheyuan built in the Ming and Qing dynasties around the city. All proposed construc-

tion or restoration projects involving these sites must first be approved by the Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics.

Crisis Responders Assembled in Sichuan

By Chen Si

Chengdu, Sichuan Province is now home to China's first crisis response team. The group, made up of 106 specialists, psychologists and volunteers, was formed on July 17 and is intended to provide on-the-spot assistance in sudden social crises such as suicide threats.

"Suicide is the tenth most common cause of death today in all of China. However, the frequency of suicides could be slashed 75 percent if we were able to do spot intervention in attempted suicides," said Ma Yugen, psychologist and member of the team, as quoted in a story in the Sichuan-based *Tianfu Morning Post* last Friday.

He referred to a recent suicide, in which a man jumped to his death from the roof of a building on Chunxi road in Chengdu after five hours of deliberating. Mao and other members of the team believe that tragedy could have been averted, if they, or others, had been able to intervene.

By Shan Jinliang

At 9 am on July 11, a crowd of people queued up outside the new Wal-Mart store in Shijingshan District to get their hands on the eagerly anticipated membership forms for the retail giant's new bulk goods emporium, Beijing Sam's Club. But the store didn't let them in until 11 am. Some consumers thought this rather high handed and dismissive behavior by the globe spanning, corporate behemoth. But things were about to get even more upsetting.

Once in the door, people found they would have to agree to a detailed set of membership rules. Some visitors to the store later complained to *Beijing Star Daily* that they were upset by these rules which said Wal-Mart had the authority to cancel memberships or even change the rules without prior notice.

Though most consumers weren't too bothered, some were angry and a few legal experts and members of national and local consumers' associations have questioned the legality of the rules.

In an interview with *Beijing Today* on Monday, Wang Qianhu, director of the Complaints and Lawsuit Department of China Consumers' Association pointed out some of the areas in which Wal-Mart's rules contravene the *State Law for Protecting Consumers' Interests*.

Membership rule list

1. Sam's Club has the right to withdraw the membership of anybody who threatens the interests of the club.

Wang: Since there is a contract between consumers and the store, the moment people become members of the club, any withdrawal of the contract would be a breach.

Miss Zhang, marketing officer of a foreign company

How do you define "club interests"? It doesn't specify it in the rules, but as far as I am concerned, it means if the club says you are wrong, then you are wrong. If there is a conflict between the club



Photo by Photocome

Wal-Mart Upsets Locals

and me about a commodity's quality and I make it known through the consumers' association and the press, am I a troublemaker? If I then have my membership rescinded, would I get back the membership fee?

Ms. Liu, Shougang engineer

It's unacceptable for Wal-Mart to cancel my membership or change their store rules just as they like because I have paid for their service. They can't do this without my permission. If Wal-Mart makes too strict rules for its Sam's Club members, nobody will come.

Richard Soud, US citizen

I do not know about the specified rules, but I imagine they would not withdraw your membership unless you did something improper. I will be a member of the Sam's Club, and I am not worried that I might lose my membership. Why would they want to put consumers off? Besides, this is a market economy. If you do not like the club, don't join it. I know the relationship between US Wal-Mart and consumers is pretty good.

Wal-Mart: This article is intended to protect the interests

of our members since we would only withdraw the membership of those who behave in a manner conflicting with the interests of the club and other members. It's true we don't have an article specifying the situations which might lead to withdrawal of membership, but since there have been virtually no disputes over membership withdrawal anywhere else, and since we are unlikely to need to resort to that, there is no need for such an article.

2. Members must accept all the rules of Sam's Club, and it has the right to amend the rules

without informing members.

Wang: This is an unfair article which encourages the uncontrolled expansion of Wal-Mart's rights. Power needs to be entitled by the law. If public opinion and the press denounces its actions, Wal-Mart will be flexible. But if an individual argues with them, they would deny the rights of the consumer using such a rule as a weapon.

Li Feng, construction worker for Shougang Group

Big stores tend to trick consumers, and it is the same with Wal-Mart, but it is unlikely they will just cancel memberships as they like. The membership rules should be framed by both sides, and any amendments should be agreed by members.

Wal-Mart: Wal-Mart has the same set of rules in all its worldwide stores. Why would it want to scare away consumers by casually changing the rules? Since Wal-Mart entered China in 1996, no dispute about this article has occurred. This article enables us to change and perfect the rules. If anyone thinks the amendment is against his or her interests, he or she could discuss it with us. As a business, Wal-Mart has the right to choose its own business model and to change our rules in line with needs of the members and the market.

3. Sam's Club is empowered to stop anyone entering the store who damages the interests of the club.

Wang: "Damage" is often a subjective valuation, so who will determine if something is damaging the interests of the store? This could damage the consumers' interests.

Ms. Liu, Shougang engineer
You might say I am damaging your interests, but what if I said I was not?

Wal-Mart: We aim to protect the interests of our members, and it is not unreasonable to worry about such things.

Joel, US citizen: The store could reserve its rights if someone acts inappropriately. For instance, if someone is drunk or breaks something in the store they could be thrown out or have their membership rights removed.

Jiao Yanlong, lawyer of Beijing

Weiling Law Firm:

This conflicts with the basic rights of the members. Members have paid to enter the club and enjoy its preferential policies.

4. Minors have to be looked after by their parents.

Wang: Chinese law stipulates people under 16 are minors, how could you possibly decide if he or she is a minor just by his or her appearance? And couldn't they be looked after by their uncle or aunt?

5. Consumers must be well dressed while shopping.

Wang: How do you define "badly dressed"? This is also subjective.

6. Members must not open packages of products they don't intend to buy.

Wang: If consumers do not open the package, who is responsible if there are quality problems? Is Wal-Mart just looking for a way to avoid responsibility? Retailers are obliged to open the package to introduce or show its functions. It is not a question of specifying the rule, but of localizing the business model to be in line with local law and consumption habits. Chinese consumers are too kind, and they tend to think big and famous companies will not hurt their interests.

Ms. Zhao, computer engineer, Shijingshan District, member

I can accept all the rules even if there are some changes, and I do not think they would withdraw consumers' membership with no reason.

Wang Tao, officer of the General Administration of Radio, TV and Film

I had no idea about the Wal-Mart rules when I became a member of Sam's Club, but I am not worried about the possibility that they would lift my membership because this company is high up in Fortune's (Global) 500. Such problems don't happen since they need more members, but I have to say that Wal-Mart should amend its rules in line with Chinese shopping habits.

Pei Liang, secretary general of China Chain Stores Association

It is understandable for membership stores to set strict rules but it will take quite a long time for the Chinese to get used to membership stores.

By Yu Shanshan

A policy encouraging government officials to enter private business recently stirred up quite an argument. On July 6, *Changsha Evening News*, a newspaper in Changsha, Hunan province, reported that local government officials were being encouraged to quit their positions and enter private business, with an extra payment as a bonus.

According to the report, in order to develop local private business, the Hunan Ministry of Personnel released a new policy, saying that every official who quit could "still earn salary from their position in government, and could still move back to their original departments".

However, in a phone interview last Friday, Zhou Wen, vice director of the administration office of the ministry told *Beijing Today* this information was not entirely accurate. He also said the policy encouraging government officials to plunge into "the frontline of economic construction" has been practiced for three years and only this July did they put special stress on private business.

"Quit is quit," Zhou said. "Once quit, they are not government officials any more, they just get 'quit pay' (equal to up to five years salary) as an encouragement. Their original departments would keep their personal archive for five years at most, but that doesn't mean they can come back anytime in those five years without examination or an interview program."

"In a province where the economy is not so developed, to be

Giving Officials a Little Help

Hunan government officials "encouraged" to enter private business

a government official still has special attraction in most people's minds," Zhou said. In 2003, 30,000 local people applied for 3,000 positions in government. In the three years since the policy was released, only 50 provincial level officials have quit their positions. "Those officials who have important positions would rather not leave. After all, a human resource manager does not have the same status as a leader in government," Zhou said.

But people have questioned the policy. Could government relationships cause unfair competition, or even corruption? Is it really so necessary to have so much "quit pay"? Opinions follow:

Qin Xiyan, lawyer of Qin Xiyan United Lawyer's Office, a former official from Hunan Provincial Department of Justice

In 2000, when I and sixteen other people left Hunan Provincial Department of Justice, I didn't care whether there was any quit pay for us. So I didn't take the money. Being a government official sounds good, but when I was an official, I always felt that

what I could do was limited, that my knowledge couldn't be fully used. I had a lawyer's license, so I quit. Now, being a lawyer, if there is something that I don't want to do, I don't do it. But if I was still in my former position, I would have had to do it. Now my dream is to push my legal firm into international competition. So I think the policy is very positive for personal development, as well as being good for the country.

Liu Haiming, graduate student of College of Culture and Mass Communication, Guangxi University

A quit pay equaling five years salary to persuade officials to leave – is it reasonable or necessary? This sum of money is equal to the salary for someone who chooses to work for a private business. Such a policy not only harms the whole image of the reform of the personnel system but also creates a burden for the country. "Five years" seems to be a life-buoy-type suggestion that if they'd rather come back in five years, they can do so without much difficulty. It's

safe for them, but dangerous for private businesses -- would the newcomers be totally dedicated to their new jobs?

Zhou Dongfei, Internet surfer

They say it takes 28 people to feed a government official. The policy, as far as I am concerned, is to pave a road for repositioning redundant personnel. Based on that, we should be more tolerant, even if there are some shortcomings. Although there are many able people among the officials, long-time life in government departments has given many people a kind of horror of the market. The policy helps those who have the commercial brain to realize what they can do. Therefore, the policy is actually a very human measure, which is very significant for structural reform and will benefit people's interests in the long run.

Peng Zongchao, public policy specialist of the School of Public Policy & Management, Tsinghua University

Government officials have access to national secrets and have a powerful relationship with the government. Once they quit from the government and work for private business, they might cause unfair competition in the market. Secondly, official business will cause corruption and collaboration between officials and businessmen. Government officials have the responsibility to meet public expectations. Permitting their plunge into the market will inevitably confuse the image of government officials that has been fostered among the public.

SOUND BITES

"We have to be careful about our expectations because you don't recover from 20 years of beating in one day."
— Joseph Saba, the World Bank director for the Middle East.

Saba believes decisive and sustained reforms in Iraq are important for the recovery of growth and should be accompanied by social policies designed to protect the most vulnerable groups until growth takes hold.

"There is a dramatic and intensive

push so that people can live from 120 to 180 years. Some have suggested that there is no limit and that people could live to 200 or 300 or 500 years."

— Donald Louria, a professor at New Jersey Medical School in Newark.

Louria said in the annual conference of the World Future Society that advances in manipulating cells and genes as well as nanotechnology make it likely humans will live in the future beyond what has been possible in the past.

"This is the moment. We need to find a solution."

Supachai Panitchpakdi, The head of the World Trade Organization.

He said in an interview published Thursday that world governments were giving strong support to negotiations on a new global trade pact, which he called a hopeful sign.

The trade talks are heading for what could be a make-or-break conference in Cancun, Mexico in September. The negotiations are due to produce agreement on

trade liberalization by January 1, 2005.

"These are dark times. We may be seeing the beginning of a market that's worse than any we've seen."

— Gerardo Huertas of the London-based World Society for the Protection of Animals.

More than two dozen dolphins captured off the Solomon Islands were flown Tuesday to an aquatic park halfway around the world in Cancun, sparking an international debate about the growing entertainment

industry surrounding the animals.

"I was pleased to learn that these two brutal members of Saddam's regime are no longer a threat. The Iraqi people are safer today."

— Secretary of State Colin Powell. Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusai died in a blaze of gunfire and rockets on Tuesday, the US military said, claiming their deaths will blunt Iraqi resistance to the American occupation.

By Chen Si

Who Consumes More?

By Dong Nan

Who is more willing to spend their money, Beijingers or Shanghai-hinese? According to a survey released by Beijing Statistics Bureau on July 4, the general consumption of Beijing people is less than in Shanghai, though in Beijing the sales volume of consumer goods has been increasing by 9.9% annually for the last three years, faster than in Shanghai.

The survey, titled Comparison of Sales Volumes of Consumer Goods in Beijing and Shanghai, focuses on sales from 2000 to 2002 in Beijing and Shanghai.

The results show that Shanghai people are more enthusiastic about buying food and clothes, while Beijing people are more interested in practical stuff, like cars and houses.

Catching up?

So is Beijing catching up with Shanghai? According to the survey, Beijing's sales volume of consumer goods was 144.33 billion yuan in 2000, 159.35 billion in 2001 and 174.48 billion in 2002, an annual growth rate of 9.9, 10.4, and 9.5 percent respectively.

Meanwhile, Shanghai's sales volume of consumer goods from 2000 to 2002 was 172.23 billion, 186.13 billion and 203.52 billion yuan, a growth rate of 8.3%, 8.1% and 9.3% each year.

"Despite the growth rate, the consumption level of Beijing remains lower than that of Shanghai, and the gap is becoming even larger," Pan Jianmin, leader of the Commercial Survey Group of Beijing Statistics Bureau told *Beijing Today*.

In the three years, the gap in sales between Beijing and Shanghai was 27.90 billion in 2000, 26.78 billion in 2001 and 29.04 billion in 2002.

Engel's Coefficient

"Shanghai families dine out in restaurants more often," says Leo Liu, a Beijinger who goes to Shanghai on business for several weeks every year.

The survey shows that Shanghai people pay more attention to food. The volume of food sales in Shanghai was 70.14 billion yuan in 2000, 75.69 billion in 2001 and 82.53 billion in 2002. Beijing's numbers were 41.02 billion, 46.00 billion and 46.99 billion.

This is where the Engel's Coefficient comes into play. This coefficient measures standards of living according to the proportion of income people spend on

Shanghai people are more enthusiastic about buying food and clothes, while Beijing people are more interested in practical stuff.

their food, assuming that if you have more money for food, then you must have less disposable income. Huang Langhui, leader of the City Survey Group of the National Statistics Bureau, says that this can partly explain why the coefficient for Beijing is so much lower than that of Shanghai. In 2002, the Engel's Coefficient of Beijing people was 33.8%, and it was 39.4% in Shanghai.

Pan Jianmin told *Beijing Today* that Shanghai people's traditionally greater interest in food boosted their Engel's Coefficient, so it does not necessarily reflect a difference in living standards.

Clothes?

In 2002, Shanghai people spent 26.87 billion yuan on clothes, 7.75 billion yuan more than Beijing people.

"Girls in Nanjinglu (a major commercial street in Shanghai) look more fashionable than girls in Wangfujing somehow," comments Lily Chen, who spent her college life in Beijing for four years and now works in Shanghai.

Or homes and cars?

Under the heading of "commodities for use", the figure for Beijing exceeds that of Shanghai. "Commodities for use" mainly refers to household appliances and articles for daily use, real estate and cars.

In 2002, Beijing people spent 101.59 billion yuan on "commodities for use", 9.09 billion yuan more than in Shanghai.

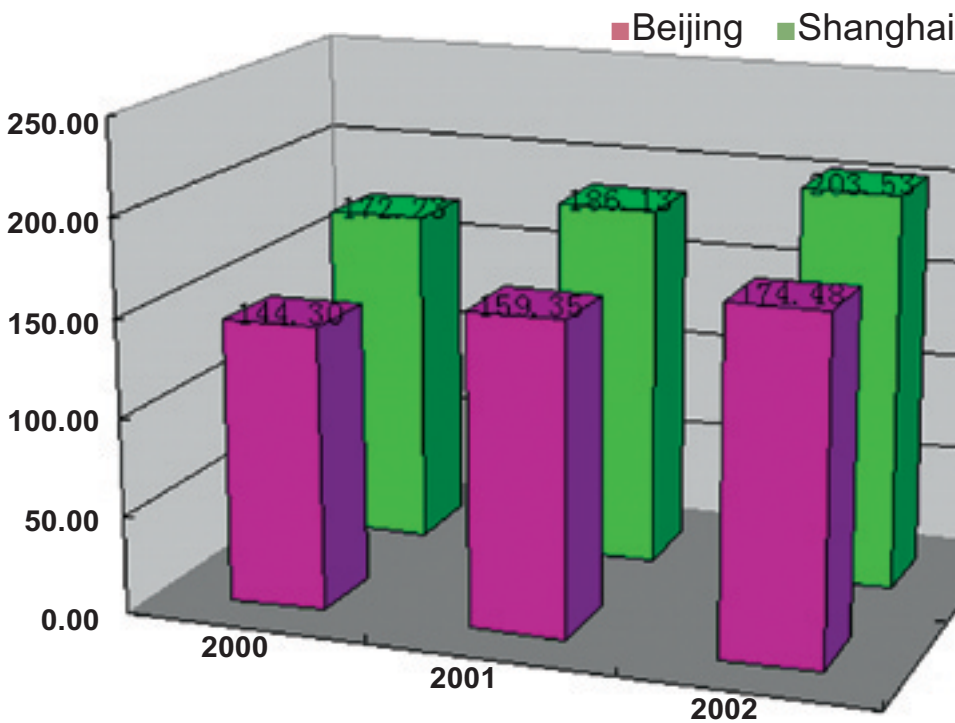
Huang Langhui ascribes this to policies that encourage buying private cars in Beijing.

"Favorable consumption policies stimulate consumption greatly," comments Huang. He thinks the government should find other avenues for this meth-

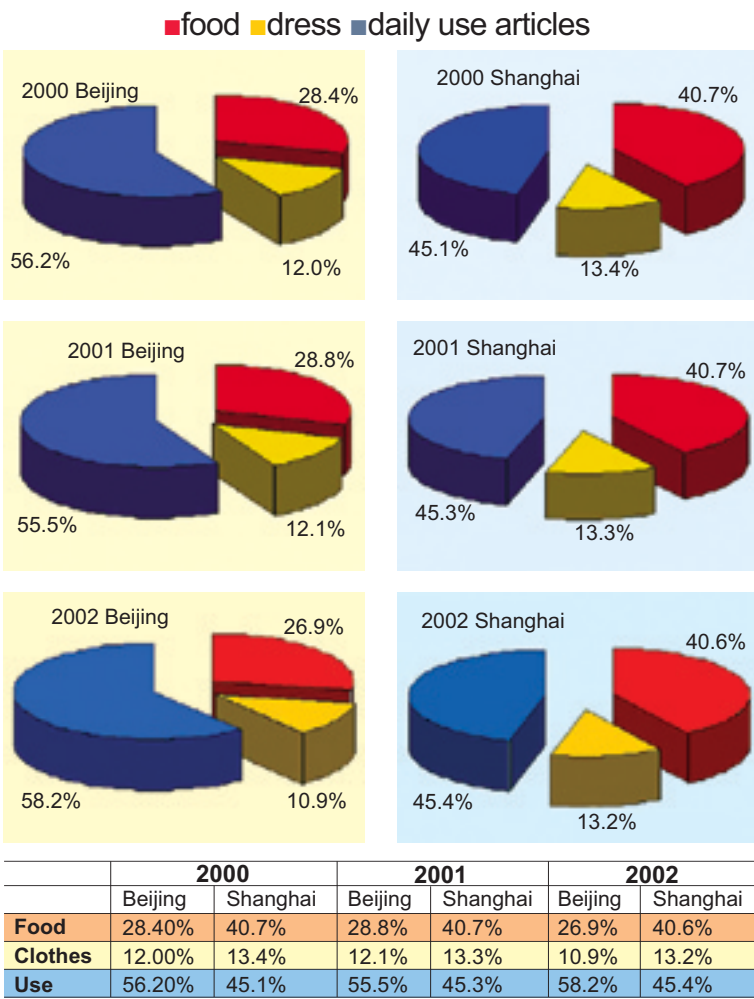
Beijing and Shanghai consumer goods sales volume

Unit: billion yuan

	Beijing						Shanghai					
	2000	Growth rate	2001	Growth rate	2002	Growth rate	2000	Growth rate	2001	Growth rate	2002	Growth rate
Gross value	144.30	9.9%	159.35	10.4%	174.48	9.5%	172.23	8.3%	186.13	8.1%	203.53	9.3%
Food	41.02	9.5%	46.0	12.1%	46.99	2.2%	70.14	7.1%	75.69	7.9%	82.53	9.0%
Clothes	17.30	11.2%	19.31	11.6%	19.12	-1.0%	23.09	9.1%	24.71	7.0%	26.87	8.7%
Use	81.09	9.3%	88.47	9.1%	101.59	14.8%	77.66	9.0%	84.23	8.5%	92.50	9.8%



Proportion of consumer goods bought in Beijing and Shanghai by Type (from 2000-2002)



od of stimulating consumption.

Volume of sales per person nearly equal

"In fact, the volumes of sales per person is very close in the two cities," Pan Jianmin pointed out. He says the population difference is a major reason influencing the disparity in overall volume of sales.

The population of Beijing was 13.82 million in 2000, 13.83 million in 2001 and 14.23 million in 2002, 2.92 million, 2.3 million and 14.23 million less than that of Shanghai each year.

In 2000, the volume of sales per person was 10, 444 yuan in Beijing, and 10,281 in Shanghai.

Different consumers

Income is another vital factor. In 2002, the average annual income per person in Beijing was 12463.9 yuan, 786.3 yuan less than in Shanghai.

Huang says different social structures also influence the average consumption level.

According to Huang, the group of people who exhibit the highest consumption level in the two cities are expats, high ranking white-collar workers and private business owners. People with the lowest consumption are peas-

ants, laborers from the countryside and people living on social welfare. In the middle are civil servants and clerks in enterprises, and since most of the national bureaucracies are based in Beijing, this section is the largest among the different strata of Beijing consumers.

"The number of peasants in Beijing is much higher than in Shanghai, as is the number of laborers from the countryside," Pan says. "Obviously, the consumption ability of these two groups of people is much lower." He also points out that the gap in consumption between different levels of society of Shanghai is not as big as in Beijing.

"Measures should be adopted to stimulate consumption among people with middle and low level income, and more attention should be paid to getting suburban peasants involved in the economy," the survey suggests. **Different consumption environment**

"Sometimes, there are three supermarkets on one block in Shanghai," says Lily Chen.

In recent years, Beijing has built many wholesale markets for small commodities, such as Tianyi and Wantong. However, according to Pan Jianmin, compared with supermarkets, the environment and quality of goods in these markets are less attractive to consumers. He suggests that Beijing should adopt the successful experiment of Shanghai in retail trade: more supermarkets and more convenience stores, especially in communities.

In 2002, the volume of retail sales in Beijing was 125.8 billion yuan, 57.73 billion yuan less than in Shanghai.

As to the catering industry, Leo Liu says there are more top quality restaurants in Shanghai, and Shanghai people are more willing to take their friends out to restaurants. "Of course, southerners have traditionally paid more attention to eating than northerners," he says, "but I think the good environment of Shanghai's restaurants plays an important role as well."

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Drug Detox Center Sells Patients

By Sun Ming

A licensed drug quitting center in Guangzhou decided to boost its income by selling female patients into prostitution.

The illegal sex-trade was exposed in March last year. However, even though the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center was closed after the scandal was exposed, and some of the staff were arrested, the heads of the center have not yet been charged.

News Probe, an influential program on CCTV, broadcast the whole story on Monday last week. The program questioned why the heads of the Changzhou Drug Abstinence Center are still at large.

Midnight telephone call

Zhao Shilong, a reporter from *Yangcheng Evening News*, a local newspaper in Guangzhou, received a phone call from a young woman at midnight on March 14 last year. The woman just called herself Awen. She said the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center had sold her to pimps who forced her to be a prostitute. Fortunately, she had escaped to freedom.

"I know it's wrong to take drugs, but I didn't deserve this punishment," Awen later told

News Probe.

Shocked by Awen's story, Zhao arranged to meet her the next day. "She looked like a drug user, pale and very skinny," said Zhao.

Awen, 31, was introduced to drugs by some friends 10 years ago. Her family has tried to help her get over the habit and has spent many thousands of yuan in helping her quit. She has been to four different drug clinics in the past few years in Guangdong Province, and these clinics tend to be pretty expensive.

But Awen kept returning to her addiction. On December 2, 2001, police arrived at her small apartment and caught her taking drugs. Two days later, she was sent to the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center.

Four months later, on March 2 last year, two pimps came to the center and took Awen away. In the following four days, Awen was forced to experience the life of a prostitute.

Reporters disguised as pimps

In order to gain evidence, Awen took Zhao and his colleague Gong Ling, a photographer, to the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center in the south of Guangzhou on March 16, 2002.



Luo Xianwen

'I didn't participate in the activity, so they let me go. I knew nothing about the sex-trade before it was exposed.'

"We were disguised as pimps," said Zhao. "I couldn't believe the center could be so terrible. But as Awen told me, they really did sell women into prostitution."

Zhao showed two pictures they took secretly to *News Probe*. One

picture was taken when Shao Liai, a worker at the center, introduced two women to Zhao. The other shows Zhao giving money for them to Shao.

After being informed by Zhao and Awen, Guangzhou police closed the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center on March 19. On December 25 last year, Guangzhou Municipal Procuratorate charged two staff members of the drug center and four local pimps, Mao Zufu, Wang Xianzhen, Ding Chuanju and Peng Anle.

The two staff members were Chen Taizhong, a section chief at the center, and Shao Liai, a common worker, but the heads of the center haven't received any punishment yet.

"It's strange, isn't it?" Zhao told *News Probe*. "I think Luo Xianwen, the director of the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center, should be the major culprit in the center's sex-trade. And there must be more people who supported Luo in the dark, because Luo himself couldn't manage the whole thing."

Zhao thinks that the heads of the Guangzhou Second Workers Sanatorium are also responsible, because the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center was operated by the Sanatorium.

Sex-trade conducted in reception room

A reporter from *News Probe* interviewed Awen in Guangzhou on June 14 this year. Awen, who asked for a shadow over her face in the program, said that she hadn't been able to live a normal life for over a year since she reported her story in March last year.

"I don't dare to go back to my hometown in Chigang, in the suburbs of Guangzhou. I'm afraid those people will take revenge on me or my family," said Awen. "I won't feel safe until all the people who supported the sex-trade are brought to justice."

Awen told *News Probe* that she was sold in the morning of March 2 last year. At that time she had been at the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center for four months.

"Chen Taizhong, the section chief of the center, told me that two people in the reception room would pick me up. I was quite surprised with the sudden news," said Awen. "I thought they might be my family."

Instead, they were two people she'd never seen before. Besides Awen, there were several other female patients in the reception room.

"Chen told me and two other women to leave with the two guys. I realized that they must be pimps, because I had heard some rumors about this sex-trade before. I cried out and struggled. I told Chen that I wouldn't go with them. But he forced me."

"Your family haven't paid your expenses here. We can't serve you free of charge," Awen quoted Chen as saying to *News Probe*.

"Luo Xianwen, the director of the drug center, entered the room when I cried out. 'It's so noisy. Take her away, the sooner the better.' I felt despair when I heard that. Even the head of the drug center supported the sex-trade," said Awen.

Awen said she and the two other women were sold for 1,000 yuan each to Mao Zufu and Wang Xianzhen. The three women were taken to Kangle village, Haizhu District, Guangzhou.

Escape to freedom

"We arrived there in the afternoon that day. The pimps ordered us to take a shower first and then put on some make up. In the evening, around 8pm, a female pimp took us to a dark street."

On the street, Awen encountered several other women whom she had met in the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center before.

"The pimp told us to just stand there. I wanted to escape, but the pimp always kept a certain distance from us. She told us that if we tried to escape, they could always catch us and then they would beat us to death," said Awen who was forced to service clients for the following four days.

On March 6, Awen escaped with another woman when the pimp who was watching them went to the bathroom. Awen got in a taxi and hurried to a friend's home in downtown Guangzhou and stayed there for a whole week.

On March 14 she decided to report the case to *Yangcheng Evening News*, an influential newspaper in Guangzhou.

Sex-trade conducted since 2001

"The Changzhou Drug Quitting Center conducted its sex-trade for at least a year," an unnamed retired worker from the Guangzhou Second Workers Sanatorium told *News Probe*.

The retired worker revealed that the sex-trade had happened occasionally and in secret before, but after March 2001 the drug center began to sell female patients two or three times a week and usually seven or eight people were sold at a time. The price ranged from 500 to 1,000 yuan.

He explained that all the drug quitting centers in Guangdong Province which were not established by the departments of public security were to be shut down by 2002. The Changzhou Drug Quitting Center, which was established by Guangzhou Second

Workers Sanatorium in 1991, wanted to make more money before it was closed.

Another inside source revealed that the drug center usually chose patients whose hometown was outside Guangdong Province, because they rarely contacted their families.

"Helping drug users recover involves a very heavy economic burden, so a lot of the patients had simply been given up by their families. The drug quitting center just took advantage of this to conduct the sex trade," said the insider.

Head people involved

According to Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court, Chen Taizhong and Shao Liai, the two arrested employees of the center, insisted that they were just carrying out the orders of their bosses. The two men are still in detention and awaiting final judgment.

Zhao Shilong, the reporter from *Yangcheng Evening News*, also said that when he went to the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center with his colleague and Awen last year, one of the people who bargained with them was Luo Xianwen, the director of the center.

"He asked for 1,800 yuan for one woman, and then cut the price to 1,400 yuan, and then 1,200 yuan. At last we made a bargain at the price of 1,000 yuan."

An insider also told *News Probe* that Luo and Zhang Yiping, the head of the Guangzhou Second Workers Sanatorium were involved. "Would common employees really dare to sell patients to pimps without their bosses' permission?" The insider told the program that after police closed the drug center on March 19 last year, Luo Xianwen and Zhang Yiping looked very calm.

"They organized a meeting and asked their employees to burn all the account books relating to the sex-trade," said the insider who claimed to have seen the account books. "It took half a day to destroy all of them."

Interview with Luo Xianwen

Luo Xianwen still works for the Guangzhou Second Workers Sanatorium. He accepted an interview from *News Probe* at his office on June 14 this year.

News Probe: Why was the Changzhou Drug Quitting Center closed by police in May last year?

Luo: They said that some staff members organized prostitution.

News Probe: Who organized the activity?

Luo: Police took more than 10 staff members including me to the police station after they closed our center. I didn't participate in the activity, so they let me go. I knew nothing about the sex-trade before it was exposed.

Zhao Shilong (the reporter from *Yangcheng Evening News*): I can prove what you just said is a lie.

News Probe: Do you know him, Director Luo?

Luo: No.

Zhao: Have you never seen me before?

Luo: No.

Zhao: I bought two women from you.

Luo: No. I never did any business with him.

News Probe: Are you sure?

Luo: Definitely.

News Probe interviewed Zhang Yiping the same day, who also denied that he'd been involved in the sex-trade.

(Source: CCTV)

Li Xuewei, an editor from News Probe told Beijing Today on Tuesday that two days after News Probe was broadcast on July 14, Guangzhou Municipal Discipline Inspection Committee ordered Luo Xianwen and Zhang Yiping to come to the committee to explain themselves.

"It was hard to cover this case," added Li. "The departments of public security, the procuratorate and the court in Guangdong Province all refused to speak to us. This is not a simple case."

Cracking Down on Piracy?

By Ivy Zhang

Piracy in China is in the news again this month with foreign companies taking action to protect their property rights by suing Chinese offenders.

Three major US film studios - Fox Entertainment's Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., Walt Disney Co. and French-owned Vivendi Universal's Universal Studios - have filed suits in Shanghai against three local retailers alleging copyright violations through the sale of pirated video discs of movies such as *Speed II*, *Courage Under Fire*, *Moulin Rouge* and *Jurassic Park III*.

The three studios are seeking a public apology, compensation ranging from 220,000 yuan to 615,000 yuan and a halt to the alleged violations, according to *Shanghai Daily*.

The case has been heard at Shanghai No.2 Intermediate People's Court. The verdict has not been delivered yet.

But questions still remain. How serious is China about dealing with piracy? How does the industry work? How can it be cleaned up?

Piracy prevalent?

Nobody knows how big the market for pirated books and discs is in China.

According to the Motion Picture Association of America's website, piracy costs the US film industry more than \$3 billion each year in lost revenue worldwide.

Piracy is believed to be very serious in China. In 2002 the market for pirated movies was worth an estimated \$168 million, according to the International Intellectual Property Alliance. The group estimated that 90% of foreign motion picture materials sold in China are pirated.

Even the Chinese supervisory bodies do not have the statistics. "We have no numbers for piracy, so there is no way to estimate the losses," Wang Yin, assistant inspector of the Publications Market Supervisory Bureau under the General Administration of Press and Publication, told *Beijing Today*. "It

is too difficult to count the numbers. There are millions of books, periodicals and music and video discs published nationwide."

This year, Wang's bureau has dug up 18 production lines for pirated discs, mainly in Guangdong. The daily productivity of each line was about 30,000 discs.

'I have seen all kinds of pirated books. They are everywhere. We have seen too much and have got kind of numb about it,' says Pan. 'I have no idea what the sales volume of the pirated books is. But there are definitely more pirated books than there are legal ones.'

Every year, books worth about 200 million yuan are pirated from publications produced by big local publishing houses like Foreign Languages Teaching and Research Publishing House. There are about 500 to 600 publishing houses in China.

"As soon as a book comes out, pirated copies will soon appear, as long as the book sells well," says Pan Yue, deputy editor-in-chief of Zhongxin Publishing House which published Spencer Johnson's book *Who Moved My Cheese* in September 2001. The company has sold two million copies of the book, so pirates were soon on the trail.

According to Pan, pirated copies of Johnson's book appeared one or two months after the legal book came out. They are available in the market even now. The legal book is priced 16.8 yuan while the pirated books go for as little as five yuan.

"I have seen all kinds of pirated books. They are everywhere. We have seen too much and have got kind of numb about it," says Pan. "Some Chinese are really determined when it comes to producing faked and inferior products."

"I have no idea what the sales volume of the pirated books is. But there are definitely more pirated books than there are legal ones."

Where does the piracy come from?

"I heard there are some small pirate printing plants in Sanhe, Hebei Province. We are not big wholesalers but we come across pirated books sometimes," a private bookstore owner surnamed Jiang told *Beijing Today*.

In some villages, he says, all the villagers engage in printing pirated books.

Jiang said he had bought two sets of kung fu novels by Jin Yong, the well-known Hong Kong au-

thor. The legal book sells for 688 yuan but Jiang got a pirated set for 140 yuan. The quality of the pirated books was okay, he felt.

"One day some guys who drove a van came by and came into my store. They asked if I wanted this or that book, then they let me take a look at the sample books. I found the quality was ok so I bought two sets," says Jiang. "They didn't say where they got the books and they didn't give their names but just left a mobile phone number."

"The pirated books we get have been through many hands. The big pirate book dealers distribute thousands of copies around the whole nation," said Jiang. He said the pirated books are usually not sold at bookstores, the state-run bookstores in particular. Only private book dealers or vendors sell the pirated books in the streets or on university campuses.

Wang Yin says there are four main sources of piracy: smuggling, underground production plants, illegal book dealers and some cultural corporations.

"There are many illegal dealers who fake their printing certificates and go to the printing plants. Some printing plant staff know the certificates are fake but go ahead and print anyway. There are also many illegal printing plants in rural areas," said Wang. Wang also said some cultural corporations collude with publishing houses.

There are also cases in which piracy stems from legal publishing houses or printing plants. Their own staff steal samples and get them printed somewhere else. This is why some pirated versions of new books come out prior to the legal ones.

What's going wrong?

Efforts have been made by the government to crack down on piracy but the problem is still rampant.

Who should take responsibility, the market supervisory departments, the police, the publishing houses or the consumers?

"Our marketing department has always kept in contact with the state supervisory departments," said Pan Yue from Zhongxin Publishing House. "We inform them about which store in which city is selling pirated books. The staff then go over there and carry out their inspection. But the situation did not improve because book sellers want to make money by selling pirate books. In any case, we are not law enforcers, we are

publishers."

The problem lies in the enforcement of law. The state fails to allocate sufficient funds and personnel to tackle the problem. And the state does not pay enough attention to this matter, according to Pan.

"The supervisory and complaint systems are in place but they are not given enough importance. It is not like fire, murder or fraud," said Pan.

But Wang Yin insists the government pays a lot of attention to the piracy problem. She said the fight against piracy has been enhanced in recent years with copyright and publication management laws and regulations that have been developed. The publication market supervisory agency has also been upgraded from temporary to permanent status.

In addition, large and open inspections are carried out by the agency twice a year, as well as secret inquiries.

But Wang admits that problems remain in the fight against piracy.

□ Laws and regulations need to be further developed to cope with the changing situation. For instance, there is no legal basis for dealing with those who print paper or packages for pirated books or those who sell the parent discs for pirated discs.

□ Law enforcement staff and funds are insufficient. The total number of staff in the press and publication department is only 2,900, which "is not enough even to manage small bookstalls". Both the inspection agencies and police are short of funds.

□ Multiple management. The music and video market is managed by the Ministry of Culture but the publishing and photocopying of the products themselves is still managed by the General Administration of Press and Publication.

□ Local protectionism. The local authorities support piracy as it contributes to the local economy by providing employment opportunities and increasing the local tax revenue. Zhejiang in Inner Mongolia, and Yiwu in Zhejiang Province are two examples of places where this happens.

"The fight against piracy cannot depend on the government alone," said Wang. "Consumers should resist piracy and publishing houses should stand up to protect their copyright. More people should participate in the campaign."

Quarantine Volunteer



Yu (center) and his students in front of the quarantined apartment building

Photos by Wang Wei

By Zhang Huan

Jiaodajiyuan, a complex of three apartment buildings, is the home of 368 students at Beijing Jiaotong University. It became the focus of media attention in late April when nine students living there were diagnosed with SARS, making Beijing Jiaotong the worst case among SARS-affected universities in Beijing.

On April 24, Jiaodajiyuan was quarantined. Four days later, four teachers volunteered to stay in the quarantine area to help the students, many of whom were close to panic. Yu Xinhua was one of the teachers.

Exciting challenge

25-year-old Yu Xinhua is tall and thin, and seems to be always smiling, making him look more like a student than a teacher. He graduated from Beijing Jiaotong University in 2000 and stayed on to work in the Youth League committee of the college of Computer Science. His work involves communicating with students and helping to organize student activities.

The first SARS case in Yu's university was diagnosed on April 17. Another four students were also suspected SARS cases. All the five students lived in Jiaodajiyuan. On April 24, when four of them were all confirmed as SARS patients, the three Jiaodajiyuan buildings were all put under quarantine.

"After the first SARS case, many students fled the campus and the university had to suspend classes. The campus suddenly became desolate, except for the students living in the three quarantined buildings," Yu recalls. "When I went to the security section of the university, I was told that the students in the quarantine area were unhappy and wanted to get out. They were very nervous and upset. They felt like they were on an isolated island and many of them were emotionally unstable," Yu adds.

On April 28, the university decided to appoint several teachers to help the students cope with life in quarantine. Hearing the news, Yu immediately decided to volunteer. "I felt it was something I should do. It was a difficult challenge but I felt excited," Yu says. Yu and three other teachers went to stay in Jiaodajiyuan, with Yu as the leader of the team.

"I was not afraid at all. I took everything calmly and optimistically. Besides, we had analyzed the SARS cases in our university. Most of the students who lived in the same room as the SARS patients were not infected, so we



Yu handing out gauze masks to the students

didn't think we would be," says Yu. However, he did not tell his parents who live in Shandong Province what he was doing. "I didn't want my parents to worry about me."

Before going into the quarantine area, Yu and the other teachers considered the condition of the students. Their anxiety was caused more by the lack of information and the state of being quarantined than by the disease itself. Yu was also concerned about how easy it would be to cooperate with them.

Busy life

The first thing that Yu did was to visit every room in the three buildings. "The students were all boys in their first or second year and studied in different colleges. I hadn't had any contact with most of them before I moved into the quarantine area. But fortunately we got on very well. The students said they felt relieved to see us," Yu smiles. Gradually, the warm greetings Yu got from students gave him more confidence.

However, an unexpected setback occurred just on the second day. One of the other three teachers had a fever of 37.5 degrees and then there came news that his wife had been diagnosed as a suspected SARS patient. The teacher was immediately sent to the hospital. "I felt a lot of pressure at the time. It was not only because the remaining three of us had more work to do, but more importantly because I was very worried that the students could have been infected by the teacher." Fortunately, it later turned out the teacher was only suffering from a slight fever. But Yu and the other two still had to take on more responsibilities.

"I was responsible for dealing with the media and communicating with the university's other branches. I also had to take care of one third of the students," Yu says. The work with

their fear and relieve the pressure," Yu explains.

He still remembers that on April 30 a student sprained his ankle when playing basketball while the teachers were all busy with their work. Finding that immediate treatment was unavailable, the student got very depressed and started cursing, saying the university wasn't paying enough attention to the quarantined students. On hearing about the accident, Yu hurried to the basketball court and promptly sent the student to the hospital for an examination. The student finally calmed down and was thankful to the teachers. Yu says he could understand the student. "The students felt isolated when quarantined here. Once they felt they were being cared about by other people, they became much stronger."

A life-long memory

For ten days from April 28 to May 8, Yu lived with 368 students in the quarantine area. Instead of being an ordeal, he sees it as a precious experience he will always remember. "I dealt with more problems and I was much busier than I used to be, more psychologically than physically," Yu says. "I always worried that some incident might happen and my nerves were always tight. Fortunately we got through it safely."

And his hard work was rewarded by understanding and cooperation from the students. "Every day, the media would come to report on the conditions in the quarantine area. They always wanted to have

interviews with the students and sometimes asked them to make up some scenes so they could take photographs. The students were very patient and tried their best to cooperate."

The teachers and the students also got a lot closer. Yu remembers a student named Zhou Xiaochuan, who got a severe toothache and was unable to sleep for several nights. When he finally could not stand the pain any longer and told Yu about it, Yu arranged for him to go to hospital. But when Zhou came back from the hospital, he became feverish. Late that night, one of Zhou's friends came to Yu and told him that Zhou was worried about the teacher who had accompanied him to the hospital and insisted on Yu calling the teacher to make sure he was not infected. It turned out the teacher was fine. "I was touched," Yu says. "The students cared about us teachers just as we cared about them."

As time went by, the students became more and more used to life in the quarantine area. When the day of their release came, some of them had regrets. Some students told Yu they did not want to leave because "life is getting more and more comfortable here."

Yu says he was impressed by how much everyone was willing to help each other during the crisis. "We always donated things for people in other provinces before but this time, it was us that received so much care and many donations from society," Yu says. Yu and the students have also built a deep friendship.

For ten days from April 28 to May 8, Yu lived with 368 students in the quarantine area. Instead of being an ordeal, he sees it as a precious experience he will always remember. Yu says he was impressed by how much everyone was willing to help each other during the crisis.



Yu directs his students in hanging a farewell banner for the graduates of 2003.

A Well Aged Drop

Wine laid down for 2,000 years excites the experts

By Dong Nan

Some 40 specialists from the fields of archeology, history, microbiology, food analysis and brewing, along with officials from various cultural heritage administrations crowded into the Qu Jiang Hotel, Xi'an, on July 12.

The seemingly disparate group of experts came together to attempt to unravel the mystery of a vessel of ancient "fine wine," found last month in a tomb from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC -24 AD).

On June 18, two bronze wine containers were unearthed from a Western Han Dynasty tomb in the northern outskirts of Xi'an. The two vessels are 78 centimeters in height and 45 to 50 centimeters in diameter at their widest point. The bodies are gold plated, with a phoenix handle on the lid.

The underside of one of the vessels was broken and it was empty. But when the archeologists investigating the tomb shook the other, to their surprise, a quantity of liquid could be heard sloshing around inside, and there was a distinct scent of wine!

Four days later, the precious jar was publicly unsealed at the Xi'an Culture Relics Bureau. Archeologists cautiously removed the ancient dirt and dust from the rim of the vessel and then removed the lid. Suddenly, a pure fragrant smell filled the air. "Wine!" cried several of the people present.

A tube was inserted into the jar, and soon a stream of emerald green liquid flowed into the first of the specially prepared glass containers. The five-kilogram vessel was quickly filled, and then another ... eventually, 26 kilograms of liquid were decanted from the ancient container.

A good nose, but tasting not recommended

The meeting on July 12 brought together experts from a variety of fields, who focused primarily on five questions.

Why is it green?

An old Chinese idiom describes scenes of extravagance and debauchery as "red lights and green wines," while ancient poems often refer to wine as "the emerald green," suggesting that green might have been the original color of the Han Dynasty wine.

But historian Li Xueqin, who presided over the meeting, argued that the green coloring was most likely the result of a chemical reaction with the copper of the jar.

Subsequent testing, which showed that the wine contained a high proportion of copper, confirmed his thesis.

Huang jiu or something else?

Most of the experts present believed the wine was some sort of *huang jiu* (yellow wine), a traditional Chinese alcoholic beverage distilled from grain.

"I am sure that the fragrance is that of yellow wine," said Mao Zhaoxian, chairman of the Chinese Huang Jiu Academy, "*Huang jiu* is defined as an alcohol made from a grain such as rice, corn or millet, which has been distilled, fermented and filtered. I believe this wine accords with those standards."

But not everyone concurred with Mao's conclusion. Cheng Guangsheng of the Chinese Academy of Science's Institute of Microbiology argued that there

was as yet insufficient evidence to conclude that the wine was not made from honey, or from grapes or other fruits.

"Just like an unopened 'black box' from an airplane crash, the components of the wine have not been interpreted yet," said Cheng.

Is it drinkable?

"I dare not take even a sip, since it is a priceless cultural relic," joked Liu Qingzhu, president of the Archaeology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

More to the point, as Cheng Guangsheng pointed out, the wine is not safe to drink. After ageing for more than 2,000 years, the alcohol content is negligible, and because of the high levels of copper and other metal traces, it would likely prove harmful to the drinker's health.

Can the wine be reproduced?

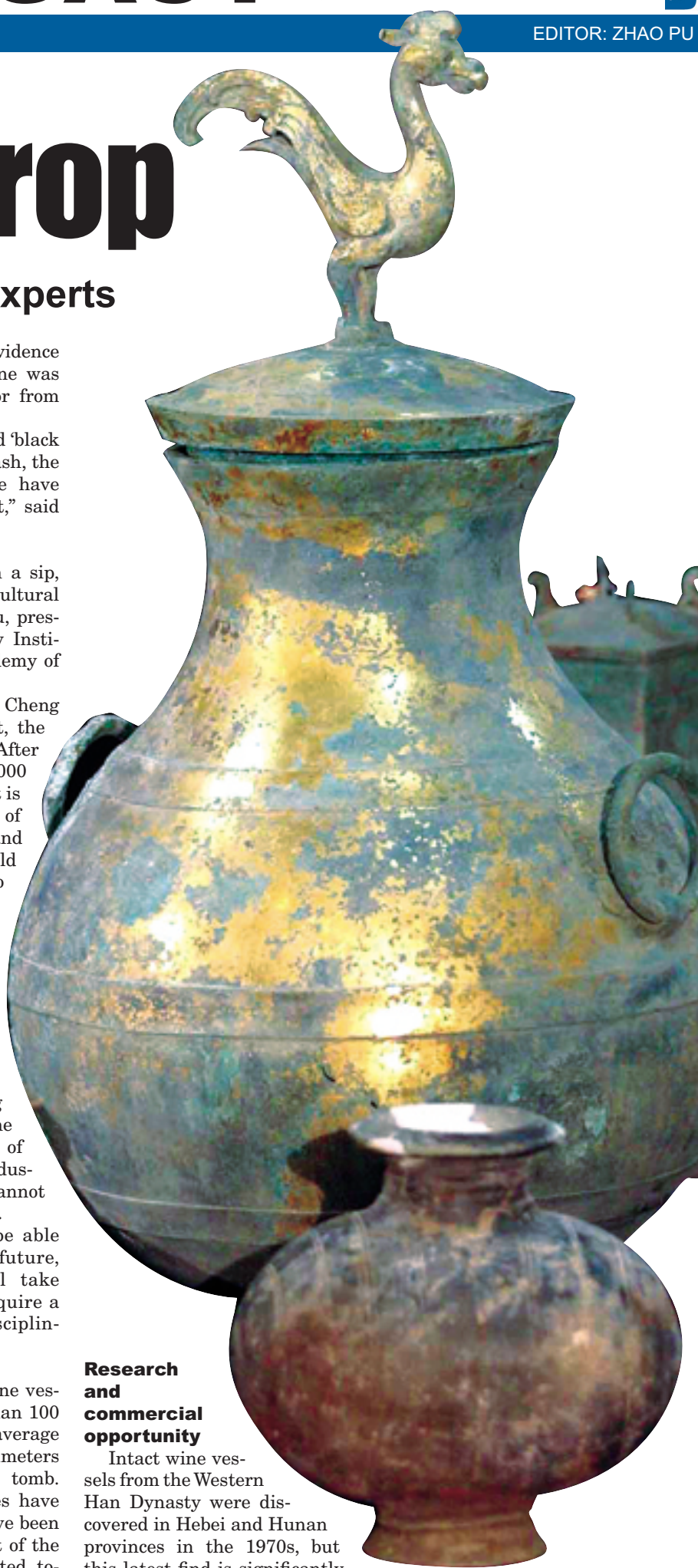
Since testing has so far been unable to confirm precisely the content of the wine, it is not yet possible to determine the actual ingredients or the distilling or brewing process of the wine, said Hu Guodong, of the Chinese Brewing Industry Institute, hence it cannot at present be reproduced.

"Of course, we will be able to reproduce it in the future, eventually. But it will take time and money and require a high degree of cross-disciplinary cooperation."

Who's wine was it?

As well as the two wine vessels, a skull and more than 100 pieces of jade with an average size of 28 square centimeters were unearthed in the tomb. Four of those jade pieces have tiny holes, and might have been part of the funeral outfit of the tomb's occupant, connected together with fine metal wires. The remainder were attached to the interior of the coffin.

Most archaeologists and historians believed that the presence of the jade indicates the high status of the occupant. "From the style of the tomb and those relics, we can assume that the occupant must have been a high-ranking nobleman in the early period of the Western Han Dynasty," said Sun Fuxi, president of the Xi'an Culture Heritage Administration.



Research and commercial opportunity

Intact wine vessels from the Western Han Dynasty were discovered in Hebei and Hunan provinces in the 1970s, but this latest find is significantly larger in quantity and better preserved. It demonstrates that brewing technology in China had reached a mature level more than 2,000 years ago, and provides valuable material for historical and culture research.

However, the priceless treasure cannot be classified as a "first-rank culture relic" at present, as no standards have been established for assessing the value of cultural relics in a liquid state. Vice president of the Archaeology Institute of Shaanxi,

Wang Zhankui, pointed out that the discovery raises a new problem in cultural relics study.

Despite differing points of view on some of the issues raised, all the experts and officials participating in the meeting agreed that an attempt should be made to reproduce the wine and put it to commercial use in the near future. Already, a dozen odd distilleries have expressed interest in cooperating in such an endeavor.

Three Gorges Coffins Excavated

By Xiao Rong

Two famous rock formations at the Three Gorges' Xiling Gorge, known as the Book of Tactics and the Double Edged Sword have turned out to be three overlapping coffins.

The rising of the water level in the Yangtze River Three Gorges Reservoir has allowed for the first time a detailed study of the site, atop a 110-meter-high cliff in the lower-most of the Three Gorges, in Zigui County, Hubei Province.

Local cultural relics departments announced on July 11 the results of the study of the 2,400-year-old coffins.

The Book of Tactics and the Double Edged Sword are well-known landmarks in the Three Gorges area. The name derives from the mythical Book of Tactics attributed to the famous tactician of the Three Kingdom period, Zhu Gelian.

No relics were found in the first coffin, while clothing and weapons, including a lance, dagger, arrows, sword and bow, made of bronze, wood and bamboo, were found in the two coffins underneath.

The most valuable finds, according to Mei Yunlai, curator of the Quyan Memorial, a local museum, are bamboo arrows and bows decorated with colorful oil painting and silk thread. The bronze weapons feature tiger and snake patterns, common totems of ancient peoples of the Sichuan and Hubei area.

The three coffins, which date back to the Warring States Period, overlap each other and are painted dark red inside and out. Small holes in the sides indicate they were once suspended from the cliff above.

With the original Book of Tactics scenery now submerged, the excavated three coffins have been moved to Jiangdu Temple, at Phoenix Mountain, Zigui County, for exhibition and further research.



Photos by Huashang Daily

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By Yu Shanshan

An army of clay figures has occupied the central exhibition hall in the China National Museum. Unrelated to the famed terra cotta warriors of Xi'an, the figures make up the work *Asian Field* by British artist Antony Gormley, the local exhibition of which is set to open on Sunday.

Gormley arrived in the capital last Sunday and immediately got to work. He has been assisted by 25 volunteers each day, from a total group of over 100 people from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), the No. 80 Middle School and other citizens. Their daunting task has been to line up the 162,000 small figurines that make up the piece.

By Tuesday, they had managed to fill around half of the 3,000-square-meter space with the little creations. They were made, under Gormley's supervision, by over 300 people of all ages from Huadu District in north-eastern Guangzhou this January. The amateur artists were told to stay within certain guidelines, namely that the figures be hand-sized and sculpted as standing and looking upwards.

Over 100 tons of clay were used in five days of furious sculpting, after which they were fired



Antony Gormley

Photo by Li Yan



They're Here...

Antony Gormley's Asian Field comes to Beijing

at a local brick factory to be ready for their first exhibition in Guangzhou in mid-March.

For well over a decade, Gormley has been committed to his ongoing *Field* series of projects involving communities throughout the world, from the Brazilian rainforest to Northern Europe. *Asian Field* is the largest of these works, which started with a 150-figurine version crafted in Australia in 1989.

In Beijing, one of the installation volunteers, a lawyer, told *Beijing Today*, "I came here because it's a chance to actually take part in the making of a great work of art, not just to observe it from a distance."

Once the exhibition opens, the CAFA students will continue to assist by acting as guides for the viewing public. "This is a product

of collective cooperation, suggesting the assembly line production aspect of Chinese society, but at the same time each piece is unique and close to nature," said one student.

"*Field* is part of a global project in which the earth of a particular region is given form by a group of local people of all ages. It is made of clay, energized by fire, sensitized by touch and made conscious by being given eyes," said Gormley at a press conference held Tuesday for the start of the installation of the work. "It's big thoughts in a lot of little pieces."

His rules for the installation of the figures are simple — they should be put in lines, all facing front, with the direction of their gazes running parallel, and naturally occurring variations in

the color of the clay, from orange to red to brown, should be grouped together, creating waves of different shades through the collective.

Every one of Gormley's *Field* pieces is installed to completely occupy its exhibition space, so that audiences can only view the works from outside a marked boundary. According to the artist, the work in effect reverses the process of viewing art, for it is the onlooker who is met by thousands of upturned faces returning their gaze.

"I do hope that people see that the significance of my works resides in negating the meaning of the sculpture and in affirming that which is endowed by each viewer and participant," Gormley told *New Weekly* in January during the creation of *Asian Field*.



Four young volunteers helped Gormley arrange his clay army on Tuesday.

Photos by Chen Bai

After the Beijing exhibition, the work will travel to Shanghai and Chongqing. Gormley intends to use the contexts of each city to address different aspects of Chinese culture. As to the local show, the China National Museum on Tian'anmen Square is "a site rich with associations to both old China and the state of permanent revolution that Mao talked about," the artist said.

The Guangzhou show, held from March to mid June, was staged in an underground parking lot beneath an unfinished building meant to evoke the evolving urbanization of this country. A municipal rice store in Pudong is the proposed location for the Shanghai leg, intended to speak to the new face of commercial China and its connections to agrarian life. The final venue, an air raid shelter in central Chongqing, brings up the subjects of the defense and survival of the individual and soci-

ety and calls to mind the reality of nation-statehood and the relationship of the Peoples' Republic to the army, according to statements made by the artist.

"The figurines [in *Asian Field*] are so small that they can be held in your palm. You can consider them as having a human soul or as simply a small flake of the earth. When the figurines look at us, they are asking us what we will do for our own future, or they are trying to tell us something, because they have been made by conscious man and so have been given conscience," he said.

The futures of most of the figurines will be rather short. *Asian Field* will tour Japan, South Korea and a few other countries, and 3,000 of the figures will be donated to the Guangdong Museum, but Gormley told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that he hopes the majority will be returned to the earth.

By Chen Si

Emerging artists are the stars of the *First Youth Art Exhibition*, which opened at the Today Gallery on July 19. The month-long exhibition includes 276 works, including sculptures, ceramics, oil paintings and traditional Chinese paintings from promising young creators.

Not surprisingly, this event is intended to give young artists a chance to be seen, according to Zhang Baoquan, director of the gallery. "Young artists represent the future. Paying attention to them is paying attention to the future," he said. "With the rise of globalization trends, national spirit is more and more important. We

New Show Highlights Young Artists



A piece of Zhuangtang Village series by Zhang Jianhua Photo by Tian Xiaotong

should not only be concerned with the present, but also emphasize the development of an independent national spirit. Only in that

way can we work out the contradictions between tradition and modernity."

Zhang Jianhua, a student at

the Central Academy of Fine Arts specializing in sculpture told *Beijing Today*, "My works shown here focus on the theme of life in the countryside, where I was born, and portray rural life exactly and without embellishment. I hope to show just how hard life in the country is for most people."

One of his works depicts an old man dressed in rags lying on a bed, with a box of nutritional supplements near his head. Two lines written on the wall beside the sculpture read: "My children have all gone their own ways and just left me with this medicine," a less-than-subtle addressing of changing family dynamics in modern Chinese society.

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By Yu Shanshan

While professionalism and polish may have been somewhat lacking in the two productions that opened the Third Student Theatre Festival last Friday, an abundance of undiluted enthusiasm provided ample compensation. The two original plays, *Juan Niao Gui Lin* (*Tired Birds Go Home*) and *Xiao Ke Xue, Xiao Ai Qing, Xiao Quan Li Pi Pan* (*The Criticism of Little Science, Little Love, and Little Power*) were staged by students from the Beijing Foreign Language University. "The most important thing is that we are here, under the lights, and it's our festival!" said Duan Jianming, scriptwriter and director of Criticism.

There were a number of professional artists in attendance on the opening night. Pu Cunxin, an actor and vice president of Beijing People's Art Theatre said to the audience before watching at North Theater, "I came on an impulse. We all once were young and dreamed of changing the world. I hope all the participating students feel the power of literature and drama in their exploration."

Initiated in 2001 by Yuan Hong, artistic director of North Theatre and a well-known theat-

Student Theatre Festival



The Blossoming Happiness

Photo by Li Yan

rical producer, the Student Theatre Festival provides an annual opportunity for young theatre enthusiasts from around China to meet and perform for their peers. "Our principal aim is encouraging originality," Yuan told *Beijing Today*.

At the first festival in 2001, there were six plays, all performed

by local students. This year, 23 theatre associations from various provinces are presenting 27 plays, most of which were written by students. As well as drama, one of which is staged by students from the Experimental High School attached to Beijing Normal University, there is also a Kunqu Opera and a silent play.

The festival, which ends August 4, is centered around two venues, North Theater, at Jiaodaokou and the People's Art Theatre Mini Theatre, at Wangfujing. Shanghai's Theatre Art Center D6 Space is also staging three plays in conjunction with the festival. All performances are free of charge.



New Album from Jay Chou

By Dong Nan

Since 2000's self-titled Jay, pop star Jay Chou has released a new album in time for every



Jay Chou

summer holiday. This year's is due out on July 31.

The album is titled *Ye Huimei*, after Jay's mother. He chose the name to demonstrate his "impartiality," he says in a press release, as the hit song of the album is titled *Under the Name of Father*.

He also says he had intended to use a photo of his mother as the cover, but Ye declined the honor.

One of the most popular stars in China, Jay's songs and images are always hotly sought after by advertisers. One week before the release of the album, more than one-third of the songs had been signed up by clients including China Mobile for advertising jingles.

By Dong Nan

The Matrix: Reloaded finally made it to Beijing cinema screens last Friday, dubbed in Chinese.

Many cinemagoers, especially students, prefer to see foreign movies in their original language with Chinese subtitles. "A student with senior high school level English can understand quite a lot of dialogue," high school student Li Xia commented to *Beijing Youth Daily*.

For those who prefer Neo et al speaking with their own voices (with Chinese subtitles), Huaxing Cineplex in Haidian offers screenings in both English and Chinese. Check with the cinema for details.



By Dong Nan

"A band comprising of a sore-head poet, a third-rate doctor and a couple of fine arts teachers," is how Sound Fragment introduce themselves, and their debut album, *The World is a Noise Garden*, might well be described in terms of the sensitivity of a poet, the clinical coldness of a doctor and aesthetic sense of an artist.

"Don't turn off my light, I'm afraid of the soundless metamorphosis in the darkness," sings Ma Yulong in Chinese, indicative of the sense anxiety and pain that haunts the album.

Ma Yulong's appearance is refreshingly unlike that of a "rock star." At live performances, he typically introduces songs with such deadpan lines as, "The following is a rock 'n' roll song," or "This

is a love song favored by girls," drawing laughter from the audience, which quickly subsides when the music starts, and his nervous, tragic voice captures their hearts.

The influence of British bands like Radiohead, The Verve and The Cure are easy to spot, and frequently repeated accolades such as "China's Radiohead" are not without foundation, but as Ma says in a press release for the new album, "Every band we love could be called an influence, but ultimately, we hope to create something new." **Line up: Vocals: Ma Yulong Guitar: Li Wei Bass: Yin Yong Drums: Wang Gan**

The World is a Noise Garden Recommendations: Zi Qi (Self-deceit), Ping Heng (Balance), The World is a Noise Garden, Wang Xiang Kuang (Paranoia).

WORLDWIDE



Schwarzenegger and his wife

Will Arnie Flex Muscles at California Ballot Box?

He's the screen's best known action hero, the world's greatest bodybuilder. But has Arnold Schwarzenegger got enough muscle to rescue California without those movie superhuman powers?

Schwarzenegger was pondering a final decision on Tuesday on an election bid that could terminate the career of California governor Gray Davis in a historic recall vote.

The square-jawed actor returned to California from a movie promotion trip through Europe in time to file the necessary paperwork if state officials certify that a Republican-backed drive to challenge Davis has gathered enough signatures to force a recall vote as early as September. (Reuters)



James Brown and Toni Rae

James Brown Marks Separation with Goofy Ad

Godfather of Soul James Brown has announced his separation from his third wife in an advertisement featuring a family photo with the Disney character Goofy.

Brown, 70, placed the full-page ad in the weekly issue of the Hollywood trade paper *Variety*, accompanied by a snapshot of himself, wife Tomi Rae and their two year-old son James Joseph Brown II posing happily with Goofy at a Disney theme park.

James and Tomi Rae, who is in her 30s, said that "due to their demanding tour schedule, they have decided to go their separate ways. (Reuters)

Funeral for 'Queen of Salsa' Draws Thousands

Thousands of fans cheered as a horse-drawn carriage carried the coffin of Celia Cruz

down New York's Fifth Avenue to a packed St. Patrick's Cathedral on Tuesday for the funeral mass of the Cuban-born "Queen of Salsa," who died last week at age 77.

Celebrities including actor Antonio Banderas, accompanied by his actress wife Melanie Griffith, and singers Jon Secada and Reuben Blades joined Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other dignitaries at a Spanish mass.

"She was very famous but was always the same person," auxiliary Bishop Josu Irujo said during the service. "In heaven she will continue to sweeten our lives." (AP)



A photo of Celia Cruz and flowers sit outside funeral home

Bad Boys II Actress Decries Violence

Gabrielle Union wants to know what this world is coming to when audiences laugh and cheer at a body being decapitated in the police thriller *Bad Boys II*.

"Where are we at in this society where they're like, 'Yeah! He was decapitated!'" Union told reporters. "I got a little nervous, but you kind of give the people what they want, I guess."

"Generally, I'm a romantic comedy, sort of Julia Roberts, kind of ... I like to leave the theater feeling happy and well-adjusted, not needing therapy, but that's just me. Apparently a lot of people like this kind of stuff."

Union can understand that director Michael Bay is giving people "what they want," but the level of gore and violence in the movie bothers her anyway. (Reuters)



Gabrielle Union

北京青年报
BEIJING TODAY
今日北京

房地产版(英文版)
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Crystal Classics

By Chen Si

The store Wanbao Qinghongyuan pitches the wonders of crystal, from small items such as necklaces to larger, more ornate and more expensive items. Nearly all the pieces, regardless of price, are clearly designed for the domestic market with marked Chinese themes and traditional images.

The elegant necklaces come in different sizes, all priced under 1,000 yuan. Other nice smaller items include the pieces "Maple Leaves Redder than Flowers in February" (880 yuan) and "Boat Passing Through a Mass of Mountains" (1,680 yuan), inspired by and named for two Tang dynasty poems.

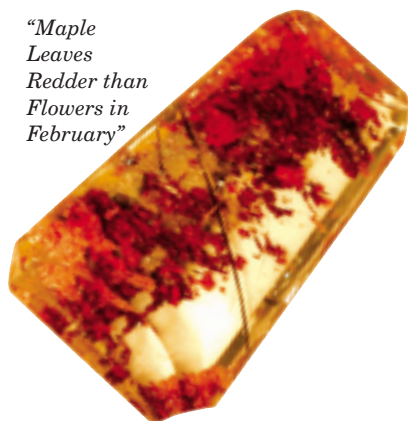
Larger goods, carved into the images of fish, mountains, the Buddha or the goddess Guanyin, start around 2,000 yuan and go up from there. Among the more unusual products are those made of faking crystal, that come in bright red, green, yellow and other colors.

"Crystal is a popular gift overseas but is not too common in China, especially high quality crystal. Beijing is more a jade market," said Wu Wei, executive manager of the store. "Most Chinese people have some faith in the Buddha, so we made that a theme, in images of the Buddha or Guanyin, or Guang Gong, another lucky figure."

Many of the goods in the store pack powerful traditional meaning, such as the piece "Five Dragons Protect the Master" (158,000 yuan), an ornate image of five dragons playing with a ball. The dragons are believed to bring blessings to their owner, who can also contemplate the zen qualities of the pyramid-like veins inside the central ball.

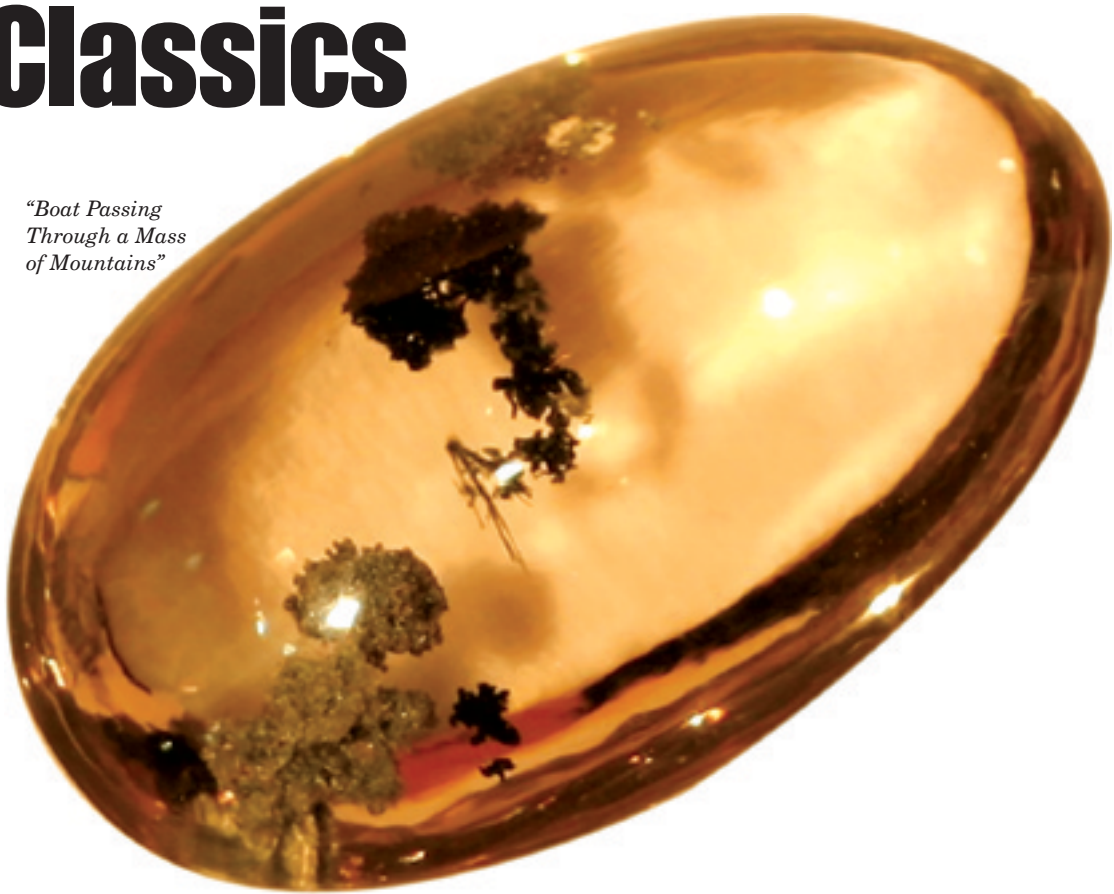
Where: Sun Dong An Plaza, No. 638 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 9 am -10 pm **Tel:** 6528 1463

"Maple Leaves Redder than Flowers in February"



Photos by Tian Xiaotong

"Boat Passing Through a Mass of Mountains"



Dashing Designs

By Zhao Pu

Sitting at an elegant sandalwood table inside her store, Yang Yang, owner of the Green & Red (Lüfeng Honglong) fashion studio, says, "Wedding dresses are our strength, whether they are Chinese *qipao* or western-style bridal gowns."

The shop is quietly perched on south Sanlitun bar street, between the Girl and River bars. Red dominates the color of the store, which is crammed with traditional Chinese clothes and wedding gowns.

May, September and October, the most popular months to get hitched in Beijing, are the busiest times for the store.

"But this year we had a slack May due to the outbreak of SARS. However, most weddings scheduled in May were postponed to September and October, so we're expecting to be extremely busy this autumn," says Yang.

Wedding gowns account for around 40 percent of the shop's sales volume, the rest taken up by party dresses and more regular clothes. The majority of Yang's clients are Chinese, mostly white-collar workers and people from the entertainment field, though the high standards of her designs and products have also drawn a following of foreign customers.

It is the personalized touch offered that causes many customers to return. According to Yang, "They usually come to us with an idea, and what we do is not only realize the idea but also perfect it. We offer suggestions from design to material to color of dresses to clients, on the basis of good communication and understanding of their wishes and needs."

Where: No. 17, Dongdaqiao Xiejie, Chaoyang **Open:** 10 am - 9:30 pm **Tel:** 6508 5893



Photo by Wang Wei

Three's Company

By Salinda

Talk about bad timing. Just before the onset of the SARS outbreak, three good friends opened a store in Xinjiekou called We, indicating the bond between them and the bonds they hoped to form with their customers.

Fortunately having survived the economic winter of this spring, their funky store has in fact drawn many shoppers with its fun line of surprising items, mostly shipped up from Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Standard soft drink cans are made into small phones (128 yuan), the receivers and microphones on the cans' bodies and the numbers on their bases.

More surprising is a tin of luncheon meat (38 yuan) that when opened does not reveal a spammy treat, but a cartoon clock. A pricier fun item is a small beverage dispenser (329 yuan) that does not dish out soft drinks, but starts playing loud rock tunes when you put in a coin.

Other items on the shelves



Cookie containers, 65 each



Coke clock



Soda phone, 128 yuan



Photos by Peng Jianwei

include light sensitive toys (25 yuan), Zippo lighters (48 yuan), hanging watches (98 yuan), CD holders (59 yuan) and cookie jars (65 yuan).

The store bolsters its trinkets with a line of fashions, such as jeans, T-shirts and skirts. Many are from famous brands like Esprit, Express and Bossini and all are reasonably priced.

Where: No. 15 Xinjiekouwai Dajie, Haidian **Open:** 10 am - 8 pm **Tel:** 6236 7708

Chocolate for Everyday Valentines

By Tony Shaw

Chocolate is a favorite way to say "I love you" and Belgian chocolates from the tiny Chocolate Corridor (Qiaokeli Lang) store in Oriental Plaza are a declaration of love that few can resist.

This little chocolate specialist opened in late February. It is a labor of love for store business development manager Mildred Xia, who says that chocolate not only makes people feel romantic and happy, but also has some health benefits.

All the confections for sale are made by Valentino, a Brussels-based chocolatier and shipped in fresh. Prices are relatively high, but so is quality.

Aside from unpackaged chocolates that fetch 45 yuan for 100 grams, the store also offers gift sets packaged in wood or book or heart-shaped boxes, ranging in price from 12 yuan to 298 yuan.

The chocolates themselves have fanciful shapes like



Photo by Tony Shaw

crowns, peaches, boats and flowers. Fans of filled chocolates should check out the over 80 different types of pralines offered, such as champagne ganache, peach jenever, marzipan, hazelnut cream, coffee and whiskey, strawberry and cream and nougat.

Those looking for a cooler treat can try the varieties of ice cream for sale, and everyone is welcome to take a seat outside the store and enjoy a rest from flexing their wallets.

Where: Bottom floor of the shops in Oriental Plaza, No. 1 East Chang'an Avenue, Dongcheng **Open:** 9:30 am - 9 pm

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Jueba with dried meat, 33 yuan

By Joel Kirkhart

While it remains somewhat obscure to most local palates, food from remote Guizhou Province is rising in fame and popularity in Beijing, mostly due to its unusual ingredients and delicious mixtures of textures and flavors.

Many of those flavors come from native products, such as *hong suan*, or tomato vinegar, a rich, red brew made from wild tomatoes native only to the mountains of Guizhou. The tomatoes are fermented after some special chilies are added and then brewed in vats that are common sights in the homes of Miao minority people of the province.

That vinegar is the main ingredient in probably the most popular Guizhou dish in Beijing, sour soup fish, or *suantangyu*. This dish is also a showcase for two other native products, *mujiangzi you*, a yellow oil made from a natural root that smells like soap but tastes fresh and fantastic, and *zao lajiao*, native chili peppers that when dried have a strong, smoky flavor with less heat than the peppers that show up in Sichuan or Hunan cuisine.

Suantangyu is presented as a hotpot, the star ingredient of which is a whole fish, normally a carp (try *caoyu* or *juyu*). The fish should be allowed to cook for a while, as it will soften up and absorb more of the tasty broth. Like normal hot pot, other boilables can be ordered, such as sliced lamb or beef, mushrooms, noodles and fresh greens. Most restaurants around town that offer suantangyu serve standard hot pot sauces made from sesame paste or sesame oil, but the best idea is to go with authentic Guizhou-style dip, a tasty, often blazingly spicy mixture of ground chilis with a block of furu, or fermented doufu, and cilantro into which you pour a bit of the broth and mix.

A similar specialty is *Wujiang yu*, wujiang fish, also presented as a hot pot but with a more peppery, less sour flavor than suantangyu. Bolder diners out for a Guizhou hot pot experience can try the *huajiang gourou*, huajiang dog, probably the second most famous dish in this cuisine. The keys to this delicacy are the freshness of the dog meat and an unlikely special ingredient, mint.

The remoteness of many areas in Guizhou led to the necessity of shopping large and preserving items. A popular treatment for meat is smoking it, producing *larou*. *Larou* is also widely made in Sichuan, Yunnan and other provinces, but the Guizhou version is still special and should be tried. Preservation is also key to dishes made with *yansuan*, pickled Chinese broccoli (*jielan*). *Yansuan* dishes are made with chili peppers, sugar, the pickled vegetable and a dozen other secret ingredients for a final flavor that mixes sour, sweet and spicy.

While it is good to have some background before diving into a meal of Guizhou food, this cuisine is generally so delicious that it is hard to go wrong. Fortunately, the growing popularity of Guizhou food in Beijing has led to the opening of more and more restaurants. They vary in quality and authenticity, but most offer tasty food that is likely to convert anyone to the beauty of Guizhou cuisine.



Guizhou huidoufu with beefsteaks in hot pot, 18 yuan

Where to Go for Guizhou

The real deal at Guizhou Dasha

By Joel Kirkhart

It is safe to say that if you want to try authentic Guizhou food, the best place to go is the restaurant inside Guizhou Dasha (Guizhou Tower) on the side of the North Third Ring Road. The chefs hail from Guizhou, many ingredients are flown in and the results are spectacular, and reasonably priced too.



A display of native Guizhou produce

Their suantangyu is delicious, with a fruitier bite to the broth than in most other local versions. Their huajiang gourou also stands out, in part because they specially import Guizhou-native mint that cannot be found anywhere else in Beijing.

A good way to start the meal is with an order of cured soya bean with coriander (*xiangqian banshui douchi*, 12 yuan), a small plate of soft fermented beans with lots of cilantro that is cooling, salty and tremendously tasty. Their *mi doufu* (rice tofu), slightly chewy, tofu-like strips in a salty sauce, is sent in from Guizhou and tastes better than most competitors' versions for it.

Ordering good entrees is as simple as pointing a finger at the menu. House special *moyu shao ya* (braised duck with taro and brown sauce, 28 yuan) is a healthy serving of meaty chunks of duck with a funky, beer-like flavor, accompanied by gummy, yet tasty chunks of unusual Guizhou taro. Other standouts include fried rotten soya bean with crispy meat (*douchi chao cuixiao*, 20 yuan), a mixture of little chunks of bacon-like fried pork along with native fermented beans, that are far tastier and have a better feel than the salty black beans that turn up in other Chinese food, and *gan-jiao qiang jiyu* (deep fried silver carp with red pepper, 38 yuan), a pile of smallish fish that are fried very crisp but are not oily. Their flavor is rich with pepper and a hint of sweet. While stir-fried gammon with fresh bamboo shoot (*zhusun chao larou*, 26 yuan) is hardly particular to

Guizhou, this restaurant's version is shoulders above most due to the fresh, crisp bamboo and smoky meat that contains relatively little fat.

The only strikes against the place are its ordinary, bordering on tacky, decor and short hours. In the evening, the kitchen closes at 8:30, by which time it can be a challenge to get some of the popular specials. The entire place empties out by 9 pm. So, book ahead and get there early if you want to get a real taste of Guizhou right here in Beijing.

Add: Second floor of Guizhou Dasha, Heping Xiqiao, No. 18 Yinghua Xijie **Open:** 11:30 am – 2 pm, 5:30 – 9 pm **Tel:** 6444 4466 **Price:** 50 yuan per person

Guizhou of another color at Zunyi Meishi Restaurant

By Xiao Rong

Though its location on the South Third Ring Road makes it a bit remote for downtown diners, the Zunyi Meishi Restaurant is definitely worth a visit for its outstanding Guizhou-style cooking.

The restaurant is attached to the Beijing representative office of the government of Zunyi, one of Guizhou's major cities and the source of much of the province's culinary heritage. Decor is plain, though that al-

lows prices to be relatively low and keeps diners focused on the food.

Boss Zhao Shanjiao most highly recommends the bamboo scented chicken (*zhuxiangji*, 48 yuan), which includes smoked bamboo shoot, *moyu*, a kind of taro native to southern China, *yulanpian*, an-

other kind of shoot, and dried fungus, along with tender chunks of chicken. While it comes in a deep red sauce, the dish is not as spicy as it may look and is enough to feed four or five people.



Bamboo scented chicken, 48 yuan

The restaurant serves the popular sour soup fish (15 yuan for one *jin* of carp), authentic with the flavor of its tomato vinegar soup base and hint of mujiangzi oil. Also worth a try are dishes made with *Zunyi huidoufu*, a

kind of bean curd covered with firewood ashes special to the Zunyi area. Huidoufu cooked with beefsteaks in a hotpot (*huidoufu niupai guozai*, 18 yuan) is delicious and probably cannot be found anywhere else in town.

A good counter to the spice-heavy fare are the series of dishes made of wild mushrooms and fungi native to Guizhou, all delicious and nutritious.

While this restaurant fails to impress in terms of style, and can seem a long ways away, its kitchen cooks up some serious Guizhou food, and at reasonable prices to boot.

Add: South Third Ring Road, Bei Xiluoyuan No. 2 district, Building No. 7 **Tel:** 8729 5941 **Open:** 11 am – 2 pm, 5 pm – 6 pm **Price:** 30 yuan per person



Goose and more at Jiaxiangqin Restaurant

By Xiao Rong

This restaurant, which opened in 1995, was a pioneer in bringing Guizhou food to the capital and has since developed a real following.

Following the initial success of the first restaurant, Jiaxiang'e Restaurant (Goose Restaurant) in Zaojunmiao, Haidian District, the second branch, the Jiaxiangqin Restaurant located in Yuanmingyuan area, has taken over as the flagship eatery and won a large customer base of its own.

Apart from traditional strong points such as *jiaxiang'e*, pot-stewed goose, and sour soup hot-pots, Jiaxiangqin focuses mainly on stir-fried dishes, which have proven to be customers' favorites, according to manager Wang Xianyun.

The menu offers several dishes made with *jueba* and *erkuaiba*, two traditional ingredients. *Jueba* is made with the root of *juecai*, or fern, and comes in such dishes as *jueba* with dried meat (*jueba chao fen-*



Miaomei fried crabs, 69 yuan

grou, 33 yuan). *Erkuaiba*, a rice-based product, comes fried with smoked meat (*larou erkuaiba*, 28 yuan) or with sour veg-

etables (*suancai erkuaiba*, 17 yuan).

True to its original name-sake, Jiaxiangqin offers several goose-based dishes, made from the skin, liver, stomach and other parts, averaging around 25 yuan each. Be sure to try the authentic cold dishes, such as *zhe'ergen* (a root-like medicinal herb, 14 yuan) *guailu huasheng* (fried peanuts mixed with spicy sauce, 9 yuan), and *mi-doufu*, (rice bean curd, 7 yuan), which stands out because of the sour pickled radish that nicely balance the alkaline rice curd.

This restaurant is popular enough that despite its huge capacity, there are often people lining up at peak times. You can check out the impressive black and white photos on the walls while you wait, or reserve a private room, though prices inside tend to be a couple yuan more per dish than in the main hall. At the same time, few dishes at Jiaxiangqin cost over 30 yuan each, making it a comfortable, reasonable and delicious place to enjoy Guizhou food.

Add: No. 8, Yuanmingyuan East Road, Haidian **Open:** 11:30 am – 10 pm **Tel:** 6254 7541 **Price:** 40 yuan per person



Fine fish at Guizhou Luo Luo Suantangyu

By Iris Miao

The name of this perpetually packed restaurant near the west gate of Chaoyang Park (and its sister branch on Dongzhimennei) betrays its specialty, sour soup fish.

Inside, decoration is simple and it tends to get noisy and hot, with steam billowing from the hot pots of soup at the center of all tables. A good way to cool off is to order a pot of homemade rice wine (*mijiu*, 20 yuan), which is mildly alcoholic and nicely thirst quenching.

Basic Guizhou-style starters such as midoufu (8 yuan) and *zhu'ergen* (10 yuan), are available in decent, if not outstanding, renditions. The restaurant ships up many of its ingredients

from Guizhou to ensure flavor is close to the source.

Things come to a head when the sour soup fish hits the table. The pot is chock full of rich red broth made from tomato vinegar, bean sprouts and fish ordered fresh from the tank, with catfish (*liyu*) going for 25 yuan per *jin* and black carp (*heiyu*) for 30 yuan. You know the waitstaff



know what they're doing when you ask for some extra *mujiangzi* you and they don't blink. The suantangyu here greatly benefits from the dipping sauce, a traditional mix of smoky dried chili, fermented tofu, minced cilantro and a few other secret ingredients that shoots straight off the spice meter.

Also available is an extensive menu of stir-fried dishes, though they take a backseat to the fish. One of the house recommendations is Guizhou spicy chicken (*Guizhou laziji*).

Reservations are not a bad idea for eating after 6:30 pm, particularly for tables in the comfort zone around the air conditioners.

Add: West gate of Chaoyang Park; other branch at 186 Dongzhimennei Dajie **Open:** 11 am – 5 am **Tel:** 6594 0939 **Price:** 40 yuan per person

Arty fare at Three Guizhou Men

By Sarah Bai

The restaurant Three Guizhou Men (Sange Guizhouren) is the creation of three painters native to Guizhou but working in Beijing, who decided to open a restaurant offering flavors of their home.

The menu here includes the standard *suantangyu* (a rather pricey version), but most items are unusual, representing the kitchen's emphasis on rural style dishes, especially those of the Miao ethnic group. Another unusual trait of the menu, at least among local Guizhou eateries, is the extensive vegetarian section.

A great way to get things started is a plate of cold stir-fried mint (*liangban bohe*), which is no longer on the menu but should be requested for its highly unusual mixture of flavors. Mint is the secret in another must-try dish, Miao-style lamb with mint (*miaojia bohe yangrou*, 56 yuan for a massive bowl). This alternative version of *huajiang gourou* for pet lovers is delicious, with nice tender slices of lamb redolent of smoky peppers and a nice mint hit.



Also satisfying is the fish with sour pickled pepper (*zao la yu*, 26 yuan), a huge fish cooked soft and covered in an oily but tasty sauce made from peppers and fermented tomatoes. The preserved beans and sour vegetable soup (*suancai doufu tang*, 16 yuan) is less successful, generally unremarkable and watery.

The decor is comfortable and understated with light green walls and sturdy, simple wood furniture, highlighted by massive windows. A coveted space is a glass-enclosed table for around 10 that would be a perfect place for a fun dinner. What makes this restaurant really stand out, however, more than its food, is its comfortable, relatively quiet outdoor dining area, a feature unmatched among local Guizhou eateries.

Add: No. 3 Guanghua Lu Xili, Chaoyang **Open:** 10 am – 10 pm **Tel:** 6507 4761 **Price:** 50 yuan per person

Photos by Ren Guangping/ Xiao Rong

Travel

Top 10 Cool Places for Summer

(1) Shunan Zhuhai (Ocean of Bamboo in South Sichuan) 蜀南竹海 23.4℃

Features endless bamboos, countless mushrooms and Chinese herbs and wild animals.

70 kilometers from Yichang, Sichuan.

(2) Jigong Shan (Rooster Mountain) 鸡公山 23.1℃

Precious plants and rare animals, it is a nature arboretum and zoo; strangely shaped stones are also a famous sight here.

Take sight-seeing bus from Xinyang, Henan.



(3) Lu Shan 庐山 22.6℃

Waterfalls, beautiful hills, ancient Buddhist temples and villas of renowned people including Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek.

Take sight-seeing bus from Jiujiang, Jiangxi

(4) Lijiang 丽江 22.6℃

An ancient city in Yunnan near the famed Tiger Leaping Gorge. Music and traditional culture are highlights, as is a visit to the ancient town of Dayan.

Take plane from Kunming, Yunnan



(5) Mogan Shan 莫干山 22℃

Features forest, precious ancient trees and beautiful buildings with styles from various countries.

Take bus from Hangzhou, Zhejiang

(6) Mu Dan Jiang 牡丹江 22℃

Features lakes, five national forest parks.

In the north of Heilongjiang Province.



(7) Lhasa 拉萨 21.1℃

Snow mountains, Tibetan culture and Lama temples.

Take plane from Beijing

(8) Huang Shan 黄山 20.3℃

Features beautiful pines, spectacular rock formations, clouds and thermal springs

Take plane or train from Beijing

(9) Jiuzhaigou 九寨沟 19℃

Features rivers and lakes, pandas and local culture

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Movies



DareDevil

Attorney Matt Murdock is blind, but his other four senses function with superhuman sharpness. By day, Murdock represents the downtrodden. At night, he is Daredevil, a masked vigilante stalking the dark streets of the city, a relentless avenger of justice. In Chinese.

Where: Sun Dong An Cinema City (Xin Dong An Ying Cheng) 5F 138 Wangfujing Dajie
When: till August 1 **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6528 1838

Da Wan (Big Shot's Funeral)

Small time cameraman Yoyo (Ge You) befriends hotshot Hollywood director Don Tyler (Donald Sutherland) who has come to Beijing to film a remake of The Last Emperor. When the director falls seriously ill, Yoyo starts planning an elaborate funeral for him, financing it with wacky schemes. Silly off-beat humor comes courtesy of director Feng Xiaogang; also starring Rosamund Kuan and Paul Mazursky. Mandarin with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane outdoor movies,

Fountain Terrace, Hilton Hotel, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** 8:30 pm (grill opens 5 pm), Jul 25, 26, **Admission:** 50 yuan (includes one drink) **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext 7370.

Devdas

India movie directed by Sanjay Leeda Bhansali, 2003, features Indian song and dance and gorgeous sets. 185 minutes.

Where: Space for Imagination, 5, Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** July 26 7:00 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

Sports

Quarry hike

Hike up a pleasant valley to a shepherd's hut and quarry at the top of a mountain ridge. Reservation required.

Where: north of Beijing
When: July 27, meet 8 am outside Lido Starbucks. Return around 4:30-5 pm **Admission:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 13701003694
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Music

Open the Door of Music

A special summer holiday concert for students by the National Chinese Opera Orchestra and Dance Drama Company, directed by Zhang Zheng, features classics and music from Hollywood movies.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, West side of Tian'anmen, inside Zhongshan Park **When:** July 26 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6406 8888

Services

Chinese fans and calligraphy of poems and your names

It is an age-old tradition to paint delicate Oriental fans. Based on your Chinese name, Mr. Hu will create a poem with your name and write calligraphy on the fan of your choice.

Where: China Arts and Crafts Building (Gongmei) **When:** August 3, 5:00 - 6:30 pm **Admission:** Free, but the fans cost from 10 to several hundred yuan.

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2529

By Dong Nan

Language Exchange

Chinese man with bachelor degree seeks a native English speaker for language exchange. **Email:** todounny@sina.com

Lectures

Everything about porcelain appraisal

Song porcelain from official and civilian kilns, is the title of this lecture by Li Huibing, Palace Museum researcher, vice president of China Ancient Ceramic Research Society. Compare genuine shards to newly-made. You can bring your collection for appraisal.

Where: Luoyang Room, 2/F, Kempinski Hotel **When:** 2:00-5:00 pm July 28, **Admission:** 180 yuan, coffee break, English translation included **Tel:** 8451 8767

Exhibitions



Paintings of a child prodigy

Yang Chun Bai Xue is only seven years old, but her mature and noble art works belie her age.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Enjoy Paradise, Huaweili, north of Beijing Curio City **When:** Daily 9:30 am-7 pm till July 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0458

Chinese Experimental Ink and Wash

Featuring a group of artists interested in new ways of creating works using brush and ink on paper style, an style that became popular in the early 1980s. Includes works by Zhang Jin, Liu Zijian, Liang Quan, Wei Qingji, Shi Guo, Sun Baijun, Pan Ying, and Zhang Yu.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwenmen, **When:** Daily 10 am-5 pm till August 17 **Admission:** 10 yuan **Tel:** 6525 1005



Exhibition of Renowned Chinese Painters

Eighteen renowned Chinese painters including Luo Zhongli, Yang Feiyun, Liu Yanming, Wen Lipeng, Zhao Youping and Li Tianxiang are exhibiting their representative works at East Gallery.

Where: East Gallery, Deshengmen Watchtower, North Second Ring Road, Xicheng District **When:** Till July 31, except Mondays 9:00 am-5:00 pm **Admission:** 2 yuan **Tel:** 8201 4962

From Chang'an to Beijing

From the ancient city of Chang'an to present day Beijing, both represent the finest of Chinese culture. A simple geographical change indicates a much more sophisticated movement that took 2,000 years to complete. Artists including Han Shuli, Wei Ligang, Shen Wei and Zhong Ruqian.

Where: Creation Art Gallery North end of Ritan Donglu. **When:** 10:00 am-7:00 pm daily, till August 1 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

East Meets West: Hu Lianjiang

The blend of Chinese and Western styles is a trademark of renowned 60-year-old artist Hu Lianjiang. Hu skilfully combines oil and watercolour to paint his favorite subjects: flowers and landscapes.

Where: Yun Zhou Galleries Room 8, 1/F Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** Daily 10 am-10 pm till July 28 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6465 3388 ext 5735

Over There - Recent Works of Wang Yin

Shandong native Wang Yin's past work has been featured at the Guangzhou Triennial and the Chengdu Biennial, as well as exhibitions in Germany, Denmark and Italy. His canvas of choice used to be black flannel. Here, he displays new works, this time painted on delicate silk.

Where: China Art Archives and Warehouse, opposite Nangao Police Station, Caochang Dicun, Jichang Fulu **When:** Wednesday-Sunday 1:00-5:30 pm till August 29 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8456 5152

Performance

PLA's 76th anniversary concert

Classic songs and dances by renowned military artists including Peng Liyuan, Yu Junjian Yan Wei Wen and Cheng Zhi.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theatre 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, **When:** July 31 to August 2 **Admission:** 100-580 yuan **Tel:** 84085525/26/27 **Email:** ticket@sohu.com

Student Theater Festival

Students from more than 20 universities and colleges perform and direct plays and operas at North Theater and People's Art Theater.

Where: North Theater, Beibingmashi Hutong 67 Nanjiaoda-okou Jie, People's Art Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till August 4h **Admission:** free **Tel:** 64048021, 66037017 **Email:** 2003@n-theatre.com

Activities

YPHH Happy Hour at Latinos

The YPHH Happy Hour of July will be hosted by recently re-opened Latinos.

The Lucky Draw Latinos' in-house DJ will take over and you can show off your salsa technique on the dance floor!

Where: Latinos, Chaoyang Park south gate **When:** July 30, 9 pm **Tel:** 65079898

Jams



Chick Rock

Six all-female rock bands including Wednesday Travel (Xingqian Luxing), Orientation Perfume (Dongfang Mixiang), Girl Red (Vu'er Hong), Wild Strawberry (Ye Caomei), Colors (Yanse) and Ice Cream Grid (Bingqilin Gezi) take the stage.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of the university of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** August 1, 9:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109

Start Party

Party Nightlife is putting on a dance and wine-promotion event, featuring Australian wine from Jacob's Creek. The UK's DJ Lauren will have you dancing, along with The Temporaries, a seven-member all-male a capella vocal group.

Where: Emergency Room, 6A Xingfu Yicun. When July 25, 8 pm-midnight **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6239 4176



Ancient Town of Wuzhen

Wuzhen is at its most picturesque in the rain. Passing by the centuries-old wooden houses, lingering along the old streets and lanes, visitors can almost breathe in the serenity and subtle beauty of the ancient water town.



Rainy Wuzhen street scene

By Sun Ming

Wuzhen (乌镇), in Tongxiang County, Zhejiang Province, has long been famed as a “water region,” inspiring poets and artists down through the ages. Today, the town largely retains its ancient appearance, lending it an atmosphere of antiquity.

During the Spring and Autumn Period (770-221 BC), the town marked the boundary of the Wu and Yue kingdoms. It took on its current appearance during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).

In 2001, it was listed as the World Culture Heritage Sites.

Water town area

Wuzhen lies in an area crisscrossed by numerous rivers, on the Beijing — Hangzhou Grand Canal. The numerous rivers and streams flowing through and by the town are spanned by stone bridges of a variety of designs.

For many hundreds of years, the people of this part of China have been building their houses along the rivers and canals. The ancient docks, waterside pavilions and miles of covered corridors create a distinctive scene referred to in Chinese as Jiangnan Shuixiang, or “Water Towns South of the Yangtze.” Jiangnan, or south of the river, refers to the region south of the Yangtze.

However the waterside dwellings of Wuzhen are subtly different to those of other water towns. Some have a slightly stretched appearance, supported by stakes or stone piles in the water. Local people call them water chambers (水阁).

Most of the ancient streets and lanes in Wuzhen have been preserved intact. They are paved with flagstones polished by the feet of pedestrians and hundreds of years of weathering. The eight main streets are all 2,000 meters long. On both sides of the ancient streets and lanes are houses, workshops, pawnshops, restaurants, bars and teahouses, all wooden structures.

Wuzhen is at its most picturesque in the rain. Passing by the centuries-old wooden houses, lingering along the old streets and lanes, visitors can almost breathe in the serenity and subtle beauty of the ancient water town. A boat trip around the network of rivers and canals is another not-to-be-missed way of experiencing the scenery.

Traditional workshops

Traditional culture and customs are still very much alive in Wuzhen. In addition to flower-drum opera (花鼓戏), shadow-puppet plays (皮影戏) and temple fairs (庙会), Wuzhen also attracts visitors with its traditional workshops, for rice wine, dyeing, silk and cotton, tobacco, cloth shoes and bamboo handicrafts.

Rice wine in Wuzhen, called *san bai jiu*, or “three white wine,” is made from

glutinous white rice, white flour and “white” (pure) water. In ancient times, virtually every family made their own wine. Today, there are three workshops still making rice wine according to the traditional method. Visitors can sample the delicious wine, as well as watch the whole process of making it.

Wuzhen is also famous for blue printed calico, which was once used for curtains, scarves and tablecloths in almost every household in the countryside of Zhejiang Province. It is still common to see old women in blue printed calico gowns operating spinning wheels in Wuzhen’s weaving workshops, and the squeak of the looms can be heard throughout the lanes.

Simian, or cotton-like silk, and dried red tobacco are also traditional products of Wuzhen, famous throughout China. In some simian and tobacco workshops, visitors can try their hand at weaving and at cutting tobacco.

Ancient teahouses

Teahouses are the perfect venue for weary tourists to take a break from sight seeing. There are numerous teahouses scattered throughout Wuzhen, always filled with locals.

Teahouses have always been the primary place for people to meet and exchange news in Wuzhen. Today, although every household has radio and TV, many people, especially older residents, still go to the teahouses to chat with friends.

Visitors should not miss the opportunity to sample Wuzhen’s white chrysanthemum tea, as Tongxiang County is famed as the “Hometown of White Chrysanthemum”.

Feel the simple lifestyle

It is not only the scenery that makes Xitang so attractive, much of its appeal lies in the easygoing lifestyle the locals have enjoyed for thousands of years. It is a wonderful experience for people from big cities to spend a few days enjoying the ordinary and peaceful life of a place like Wuzhen. Many local residents in the small town breed silkworms and raise chrysanthemums, and they retain the tradition of buying fruit and vegetables from trade boats through the windows of their waterside houses.

In May 1999, the local government invested 200 million yuan for maintaining and improving the town’s environment. The project is to be completed by 2004, and the first phase, with an investment of 80 million yuan, was finished in 2001. While taking care to retain the original appearance of the town, improvements have been made in the treatment of the water environment and the management of sanitation.

Xiuzhen Taoist Temple

Xiuzhen Taoist Temple lies in the center of Wuzhen. Built in 998 during the



Blue printed calico workshop



Wuzhen teahouse

Northern Song Dynasty by Taoist priest Zhang Dongming, it is said that when the temple was first opened to public, a blue phoenix appeared and circled the temple for a long time. Many people came to see the miraculous sight and the temple’s fame spread from that time. Since ancient times, Xiuzhen Temple has been listed as one of the three most famed Taoist temples in the south of China.

Mao Dun's Former Residence

Wuzhen is the birthplace of modern Chinese literary giant Mao Dun (1896-1981), best known as the author of *Midnight*, a massive novel about life in Shanghai, and the rural trilogy *Spring Silkworms*.

Climate: Lying in the subtropical zone with a monsoon climate, Wuzhen enjoys abundant sunshine and four distinct seasons. The hottest month is July, with an average temperature of about 28 degrees (84 F).

Getting there: Take train K13 or K21 from Beijing Railway Station to Shanghai. Buses leave for Wuzhen from Hutailu bus station (沪太路车站) daily.

To get the most out of a visit to Wuzhen, you should stay for at least one night, in order to enjoy the town’s beauty after dark. If you have time to spend a few days, there are a several nearby spots worth a visit.

Around Wuzhen

By Sun Ming

Xitang

For tourists who want to experience a feeling of simplicity and leisure, Xitang, 50 kilometers northeast of Wuzhen, is well worth a visit.

Nearly as old as Wuzhen, Xitang is another ancient water town that has managed to largely preserve its original appearance. The town, situated in Jiashan County, is known for its bridges. There are 104 bridges of varying design from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The relentlessly wet climate has inspired local residents to come up with a novel way of dispensing with the need for umbrellas. Each family built a roof over the stone-plank road in front of their home, which connect with one another to form covered corridors. The longest of these is 1,300 meters. These roofed corridors are today the main venues for outdoor activities and attract countless tourists.

Xitang is also famous for snacks such as *Xitang Zongzi* (glutinous rice dumplings), *Jiashan* wine, Red-June river crabs, and *Bazhengao* (Eight-Immortals cakes).

Wuzhen is a 40-minute bus ride from Xitang.

South Lake

South Lake, another famous historical scenic spot in China, lies around 40 kilometers east of Wuzhen. Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty was so enamored of the beauty of South Lake, he visited it eight times during his reign.

The lake was first formed during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-960), as part of the king of Wuyue’s water conservancy project. During the Ming Dynasty, an island was made with the earth excavated to dig the city moat. The Yanyu Pavilion (烟雨楼) on the island has since then attracted a steady stream of literati.

The South Lake is also an important place in the history of China’s Communist Party. In July 1921 the first congress of the Communist Party was held in a boat on the South Lake. A replica of the original is today moored on the lake.

From Wuzhen to Jiaying is a 40-minute bus ride.

Tidal Bore at the Qiantang River

If you visit Wuzhen in August or September, you will have the opportunity to see the spectacular Qiantang Bore. Yanguan in Haining County, 30 kilometers southeast of Wuzhen, is the most popular spot for watching the Qiantang Bore.

The extraordinary surging tide is caused by a combination of the gravitational pull of the moon, the centrifugal force produced by the rotation of the earth and by the peculiar bottleneck geography of Hangzhou Bay.

An annual ritual takes place on 18th day of the eighth lunar month, which for 2,000 years has been the day people throng to the Qiantang River to see this natural wonder.

Yanguan is a 30-minute bus trip from Wuzhen.

Wuzhen is also less than two hours from Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou.



San Bai Jiu workshop